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THE SECRET OF PRINCESS PAUL

By Florence Warden

HER portrait as the Queen of Sheba, by a celebrated painter, was the sensation of that year's Academy. What authority there was for representing that famous historical personage as a brilliant, blonde beauty, of a perfectly classical type of loveliness, with flaxen hair bound with jeweled fillets, and attired in silken draperies of creamy hue, nobody knew or, perhaps, cared.

Certain it is that the picture was admired only less than the original, and that, when the princess incautiously visited the Academy Exhibition on a public day, she attracted so much attention, in her trailing black garments and demure little black bonnet, that she was mobbed as she passed through the rooms; and the two ladies who were her constant attendants and companions, had to seek the assistance of the authorities before she could be rescued from the pressing throng of her admirers.

Princess Paul Dimitrovsky had been a widow for about a year, during which period she had remained in complete seclusion, at first abroad, and afterward at the magnificent mansion in the Lake District, which the late prince, her husband, had bought on purpose for her to recuperate in, while she was going through the fatigues of fashionable life in London.

Prince Paul, an immensely rich man, of a distinguished Russian family, had been fond of England; and his London house, within a stone's throw of Hyde Park Corner, had been noted, during his lifetime, for the sumptuous entertainments given there, presided over

by his lovely wife with a dignity and grace which formed a sort of halo around her transcendent beauty.

There had always been something enigmatic about the princess, who, at the time her elderly husband first brought her over to England and introduced her into society, could not have been more than eighteen or twenty years of age.

The cold dignity with which she carried herself, and her almost absolute ignorance of English, had formed no obstacle to her social success; indeed, both circumstances enhanced the weird effect of her statuesque beauty, of her milk-white skin, her chiseled features, her great, light-blue eyes, and of the abundance of lint-white hair which formed one of her most striking attributes.

She was one of those women who know instinctively how to treat their own peculiarities, or else she was very cleverly advised. For, just as her delicate coloring partook of the qualities of a classical statue, so the white garments in which it was her pleasure to array herself, followed the simple lines associated with the heroines of Greece and Rome, rather than the fancies of the Parisian modiste.

Now that she had to wear black instead of white, her beauty was thrown into higher relief than ever. English women of rank and fashion looked common, or, at least, commonplace, beside her; tall women looked angular, and short ones "dumpy," by comparison with her superb figure and perfect walk; while the noses that turned up and those that turned

down were equally put out of joint by the delicate lines and curves of her faultless profile.

It was in the grounds of Ranelagh that she made her reappearance in English society, one cloudy afternoon in June; and her coming did not fail to create the same little stir in the well-dressed throng as it had done in the old days before her widowhood. She made, in fact, a sort of royal progress through the crowd, bowing to right and left in return for the greetings of those of her former acquaintances who stood at a little distance, and acknowledging the sympathetic words of such of her friends as came up to her, with a grace as distinguished as ever.

Two young men, one of them deeply sunburnt, who were standing on the grass in full view of the princess's progress, were particularly struck with the radiant vision.

"By Jove, what a lovely woman!" cried the sunburnt one, who was a tall and rather good-looking man, lately returned from South Africa, upon whom some years of hard military service in that continent had left their mark, slightly grizzling his dark hair, and making him look some years older than his age.

"I believe you!" was the laconic reply of his friend and old school-fellow, a cheerful, chirpy little fellow who was in the War Office, and who, in consequence, looked down from a great height upon mankind generally. "She's the handsomest woman in London still, just as she was a year ago, before the old boy popped off the hooks."

"Who is she?"

William Eridge, the War Office clerk, turned upon his friend a look of mild reproach.

"Can barbaric ignorance farther go?" he murmured, softly.

"You forget that I have been tramping over African sands, north and south, for the best part of six years, while you've been chewing pens in your office. And I'm not the only barbarian, it seems, for I see a dozen

other people evidently asking their neighbors the same question I'm asking you."

And Lord Robert Tarring threw another furtive look at the beautiful woman, who had enchained his interest so strongly.

"Of course, now that London's population is such a shifting one, there are always elements in it which were not there a few months before, and which will not be there a few months hence," replied Eridge, sentimentously. "Some of these people who are asking questions are shady millionaires, whose shadiness has not been officially found out yet. A twelvemonth ago, they were still unknown; now, they are basking—I believe that's the proper word—in the smiles of our old nobility and even of our bishops. A twelvemonth hence, the bubble will have burst, and the millionaires, though still millionaires, will be smiled upon no longer. Our old nobility, having obtained what it wished from them, will have turned its noble back upon them with scorn, and the bishops will have to get somebody else to pay for their presents to the Church, and—I say, where are you off to?"

"Going to find somebody to answer my question," replied Lord Robert, impatiently.

Eridge slipped his arm through that of his friend, and said, easily:

"All right, old chap, keep your hair on. I'll tell you who she is. She's Princess Paul Dimitrovsky, the widow of an old fellow whom even you must remember."

"Oh, yes, of course I do. Lived in Burlington Square, and was reputed the richest man in Russia. Why, he must have been old enough to be his wife's grandfather!"

"Yes, so it was said."

"You don't know her?"

"No; I wish I did."

"I must find some one who does," said Lord Robert, again impatiently.

Eridge laughed. "Then, I hope you'll rub up your Russian, if you have any——"

Lord Robert, who had moved away, turned back again.

"What! Isn't she English?"

"No. She's a Russian, or a Pole, or something of that sort. And, moreover, she's either too stupid to learn English, or won't take the trouble. Anyhow, I'm told she speaks with a strong accent, and as little as possible. But nobody seems to care. It really doesn't matter much what you do, or do not do, when you give dinners where people are not poisoned, and concerts where they're not bored. And that was the reputation their house had in the prince's time, I know. If it were not you I am talking to, I should pretend I'd been there. But, as a matter of fact, I haven't had the chance."

Lord Robert was looking at the princess, with a sort of worship in his eyes.

"By Jove, there's Atheling speaking to her! I've always hated Atheling, but I must forget that fact. I must get him to introduce me."

"Perhaps, he won't," suggested Eridge, mischievously. "It looks to me as if he were making up to her himself."

"Nonsense!" said Lord Robert, sharply; "a lovely woman like that! She wouldn't waste herself on a fellow of his stamp."

"Well, there's no accounting for a woman's taste, you know."

"But an old roué like Atheling! And as ugly as the devil, besides!" said Lord Robert, indignantly.

"Well, they'd make a beautiful contrast to each other," said Eridge, while his friend's eyes followed jealously the two contrasting figures—the tall, fair, erect woman, and the short, sallow-complexioned man with hair and mustache dyed a brilliant black, and head bent under the weight of years and wickedness.

As Lord Robert was again looking about him, intent on realizing his wish to obtain an introduction to the beauty, his friend touched his arm, and spoke more seriously.

"Look here," said he; "if you are

really in earnest, as I hope you're not, let me give you the straight tip. You won't be able to get speech with the princess unless you make friends with the body-guard."

"What body-guard?" asked Lord Robert, sharply.

Eridge made him turn his head a little, in the direction where two ladies of unremarkable, not to say insignificant, appearance, were walking over the grass at a little distance behind the princess.

Both were dressed in black. The elder, a slender, upright woman between forty and fifty years of age, had dark hair, which was growing gray, but was dressed youthfully and made lavish use of pearl powder to hide the ravages of time on a sallow face. She had hazel eyes, which she kept down, and her face wore a furtive and watchful expression.

Her companion was a prim little person of curiously old-fashioned aspect, who held her head slightly on one side, moved with an affectation of extreme languor, and had altogether a faded and early Victorian air, as if she had founded herself upon the manners and affectations of a bygone generation. Her features were insignificant, and, if the two men had been near enough to hear, they would have found out that she spoke with a lisp.

"Who are they?" asked Lord Robert, rather uneasily. There was something about the body-guard which roused misgivings in him.

"That's what nobody exactly knows," chirped Eridge, confidentially. "They're English, both of them, so they can't be her relations——"

"Her relations! Those women!" scoffed Lord Robert.

Eridge went on, imperturbably: "—and they're certainly not his. One of them is said to be teaching the princess English, which she appears never to learn. But, as for Lady Barrs, the other, heaven knows what office she occupies! People *do* say——"

"Oh, I don't want to hear any gossip," said Lord Robert, impatiently. Then, after a moment's pause, during

which he had tapped the ground nervously with his foot, he said, in a low voice:

"Well, what is it they say?"

"Oh, nothing that you need mind hearing. Nobody knows anything against her; the princess has the absolute discretion of an iceberg. It was only the jealous care the prince took of her that made people talk; but, after all, that was natural enough in an old husband, and with such a beautiful wife, too!"

"Yes, of course it was."

Not at all diverted from his purpose, Lord Robert presently found means to get himself introduced—not, indeed, to Princess Paul, who was by this time entirely shut in by old acquaintances who had come up to pay their court to her, but to the elder and the more important-looking of the members of the "body-guard."

Lady Barrs was graciousness itself, and said how delighted it always made her to know the heroes of the late wars; she told him, also, that she had read his name and his deeds in the newspapers, and knew a great deal about him, from friends of her own who had been in Africa; and then she insinuated, in a tactful manner, that she had heard it said he had earned the Victoria Cross two or three times over, and that it was only through somebody's jealousy that he had not received it.

Lord Robert, while recognizing that all this enthusiasm was rather strange, was not displeased by it; Lady Barrs was one of those clever people who do their flattering discreetly, and know when to stop. It was otherwise with Miss Egerton, whose conversation quite carried out the idea given by her appearance. She "adored" the army, "doted" on polo, "worshiped" music, and "loved" the princess "to distraction."

Lady Barrs gave him some information about the illustrious widow.

"The difficulty Miss Egerton and I had in bringing her here to-day,"

she said, in a low voice, to Lord Robert, in whose eyes she saw the deep interest he took in her friend and patroness, "is almost beyond belief. We had begun to fear that the intense melancholy into which the prince's death threw her would injure her health."

"But he was very old, was he not? A man of eighty could scarcely be expected to live on indefinitely!" interrupted Lord Robert, rather shortly.

"Ah, but she was such a child! And so affectionate!" persisted Lady Barrs. Then, as she saw a look of incredulity pass over the young officer's face when he glanced toward the beauty's impassive countenance, she added, quickly: "Of course, you can scarcely believe that, you who see her like this for the first time. But she has a heart of gold, and is deeply attached to her friends. Why, she never goes anywhere without Miss Egerton and me, just because we are two poor castaways on the sands of life, without any ties or any brightness in our lives, save her devotion to us!"

"Well, that's a very nice trait in her character, and I don't wonder you love her for it," said Lord Robert, trying to appear convinced; "but it's not one a stranger would give her credit for."

"Don't judge too much by appearances," said Lady Barrs, playfully. "It's never safe with a woman of her race."

"She's a Russian, is she not?"

"A Pole. She is one of the Jagiello, who were rulers of Poland four hundred years ago. Her maiden name was Jagiello—Sophie Jagiello. It always seems to me that she was born with the melancholy in her nature which attaches to the fate of that unhappy race."

"Well, the race might have been expected to get over that in four hundred years!" said Lord Robert.

Lady Barrs smiled amiably, but Miss Egerton, who overheard, looked as if she thought him flippant.

"She's the sweetest creature, for all her melancholy," went on Lady Barrs. "I must introduce you to her."

"There's nothing I should like so much," said Lord Robert, with evident sincerity.

Indeed, by this time, the honest fellow's admiration had been remarked in various quarters, and Princess Paul's attention had been drawn to the shy glances he so frequently cast in her direction. But it was in vain that Lady Barrs tried to attract her illustrious friend's notice, so that she might have an opportunity of presenting Lord Robert to her.

It almost seemed, so poor Lord Robert thought, that the princess took pains to avoid the introduction, and this thought smote him sorely. For he was, indeed, as Eridge and Lady Barrs both saw, so strongly attracted by the striking beauty and grace of the princess as to be incapable of paying much attention to anything but the fact of her presence. Polo had lost its attraction; he cut his oldest friends. When he and Eridge got into the hansom which was to drive them back to town, his companion laughed slyly, and was about to rally him on his sudden infatuation, when the look on Tarring's face warned him that the subject had better be left alone.

The thing that cut Lord Robert more to the heart than the princess's avoidance of himself, was the fact that she had permitted Sir Gilbert Atheling to be with her so long. Was he, could he be, so much in her good graces as to be a possible suitor for her hand?

The thought sickened Lord Robert, who, chivalrous by nature, would have had the woman he admired shrink with disgust and loathing from such a creature as the old baronet.

As ill-luck would have it, almost the first person he and Eridge came across, at the club where they alighted, was the baronet, who was crossing the hall as they entered. He turned at once to the two younger men.

"Hello, Tarring! Were you at Ranelagh?" said he, stroking his dyed mustache, and staring at Eridge, whom he did not know.

"Yes; I saw you there," said Tarring, rather shortly.

"Didn't see much of the game, though. I was with a lady."

The way in which he said these words made Lord Robert's blood boil. He would have turned away, but Sir Gilbert went on: "Did you see her?—Princess Paul Dimitrovsky; showy-looking woman with nearly white hair."

"Yes," said Lord Robert; "I saw her."

He was thankful he had not got his introduction through his interlocutor. The latter went on:

"Don't you know her? Widow of the old prince who used to cut such a dash on the turf, twenty years ago. She's rolling in money. All the bachelors in London are after her."

"With you at their head?" asked Lord Robert.

"I? Oh, no!" And Sir Gilbert shook his head. "Too old a bird! There's a mystery about the princess. Do you see the airs that footman of hers gives himself?—a man who has been in their service some time, and who was the only servant the prince was never known to swear at. Depend upon it, the man knows something, and he has to be well treated."

Lord Robert's face betrayed the anger which was rising in his breast. Sir Gilbert went on, with mischievous pleasure. The keen feelings of younger men amused him.

"Then, those two old crones who always go about with her wherever she goes! Would anybody who was quite above reproach tolerate such a pair?"

"Only the most good-natured woman in the world, and the most generous," said Lord Robert, quickly.

"Ah!" The baron turned upon him with an evil leer. "That's it. Perhaps, the princess is more good-natured than she looks. Perhaps, that

statuesque air is only one side of the lady's character."

"I should believe nothing against her without the clearest proof," said Lord Robert, "nor would any other man of decent feeling!"

Sir Gilbert shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh," said he, "I know nothing of her; I say only what other people say. My own particular opinion about her is that she drinks."

Before the last word was well out of his mouth, the old roué fell back a couple of steps with a cry.

For Lord Robert, forgetting discretion, forgetting his own advantage of years, had raised his gloves and struck the baronet across the face, with so much force that Sir Gilbert's false teeth were dislodged, and his cheeks were left at first livid and then an ugly purple hue.

II

THERE was a stir, a rush, a sensation. Other members of the club pressed around the baronet and his assailant, who were both well known, and popular in different ways.

Sir Gilbert Atheling had been a prominent man-about-town for many years, noted in connection with sport and other forms of pleasure; while Lord Robert Tarring, though he had been back in town only a few months from the Dark Continent, where he had spent the best years of his early manhood, was very generally liked for a certain simplicity and directness, a tone of chivalry and a freshness of interest in life, which were rather new and amusing among the men of his own class. The young man regretted his act, bitterly, the moment it was done. It was not only that he had assaulted a man much older than himself; he had also done something which would inevitably cause more gossip about the woman who had made so strange and so strong an impression on him, and who had filled him with a sort of worshipful reverence, which he himself could scarcely understand.

He got away with Eridge as quickly

as he could, without giving any explanation to the friends who came around him, other than to say at once that he had acted in the heat of the moment, and was sorry for what he had done.

This explanation, however, was presently carried by a judicious friend to Sir Gilbert, and, through the good offices of a couple of men who were common friends of both, a more formal apology was sent and accepted, and the end of the matter was that the baronet and the young officer met, and a reconciliation ensued, which was, perhaps, not very heartfelt on either side.

The baronet put on the dignity of superior years, told Lord Robert that he knew the men and women of London better than a newcomer could do, and assured him that he was the last person to pass too hasty a judgment, or too harsh a one, upon any member of the circle in which he moved.

"What I said to you about the men and women of our common acquaintance," he went on, in a rather dry tone, while the younger man chafed at each word, "was said in confidence, and in all good faith. Prominent people, of both sexes, are bound to be subject to discussion. Without wishing to spread scandal, one may fairly mention stories which have been widely repeated, and which appear to have some basis of truth. And it would be a very bad day for the young men who come fresh to London life, in profound ignorance of the characters of the people they meet there, if their elders were studiously to refrain from uttering words of warning concerning undesirable infatuations."

Now, this speech was probably intended as an act of vengeance for the assault; and, if so, it served its purpose well. While it was uttered with an appearance of the greatest magnanimity, it was in reality a barbed thrust into the young man's sensitive heart. There was nothing for Lord Robert to do, however, but to hold his feelings in check, and to say as little as possible. But he left the presence of the elderly baronet with a firm conviction that Princess Paul had snubbed Sir Gilbert,

and that this was the man's ignoble revenge—to spread vague reports about her which he did not attempt to substantiate.

It was within a week of this unfortunate affair that Lord Robert found himself at a dinner-party, in one of the best houses in London, where Princess Paul was one of the guests.

If she had looked lovely in her outdoor dress, her small black bonnet and high black gown, she was far more radiant in the low-cut evening dress which showed a neck and arms as beautiful as her face. Pearls, which had filled his ignorant masculine mind with wonder at their vogue, now revealed themselves to Lord Robert's dazzled eyes as the most beautiful of ornaments; for on Princess Paul's white neck were half-a-dozen rows of them. And these were all the jewels she wore.

Only a woman of regal and surpassing beauty could have borne well, in the society of so many other exquisitely dressed women, such a severely simple style as this. But, as usual in such cases, her loveliness looked all the more resplendent by reason of the stern simplicity of her attire; and, when Lord Robert met her eyes through the ferns and foliage, the lamps and the little tinted shades, across the table, he felt an exhilaration in the fact of her presence, an intoxication in the glance of her blue eyes, such as he had never conceived that any woman could rouse in him.

The dinner was long, and, in the opinion of the majority of the guests, supremely dull. The mansion was too vast for enjoyment. The great table, with its gleaming damask, shining silver, tinted lights, its rows of guests, and ranks of silent servants, seemed but an oasis in the midst of a desert of Persian rugs; while the painted ceiling above, the Corinthian pillars that supported it, and the tapestries of priceless value which formed lugubrious panels on the walls, all helped to give the entertainment a certain remoteness from ordinary life which was not exhilarating even to guests of high rank.

It was as if they had been feasting in a mausoleum.

But, to Lord Robert, the aspect of everything was changed the moment he caught the glance of the princess's blue eyes. And, when he saw her exchange a brief look with Lady Barrs, who was on the opposite side of the table, and the sole representative of the body-guard, and then cast another glance at himself, the young man felt that he was in heaven.

He felt that, while she had probably heard of the scene at the club, she was not displeased by his part in it. On the other hand, this knowledge filled him with such an overpowering shyness that he knew he could not bear to ask for an introduction to her that evening.

And yet—it was hard to be so near, and still to refrain!

There was a lofty suite of palatial drawing-rooms to wander through after dinner; but even a large accession of guests, assembled to hear the violinist of the season play and a great French actress recite, failed to fill the somewhat dreary vastness of the stately rooms. The hostess was a very great lady, who looked with horror upon crowds, and who would have considered her rooms profaned by anything like a crush of guests.

The result was a certain air of melancholy as well as of frigid correctness, and Lord Robert laughed to himself at the idea that there could be anything to be said against a woman who was received within these sacred walls.

He could not see the princess in any of the rooms he passed through, and, at last, he went out into the courtyard, where a fountain was playing in a huge majolica basin, and where groups of tall palms, baskets of roses and gigantic feathery ferns tried in vain to lessen the coldness of the impression made by the tessellated floor and the overgrown pillars around.

It was not seriously classical, this building of the eighteenth century, with its superstructure of the nineteenth. But it was classical enough to be rather chilling, and Lord Robert

lighted a cigarette with a furtive feeling that he might be doing wrong.

With one foot on the edge of the majolica basin, he had begun to smoke, when he heard a step which sent the blood to his head, and made him at once drop his cigarette and stamp upon it. For, before he looked around, he was conscious that he was in the presence of the queen of his dreams.

A queen she looked, indeed, as she stood with her long dress of dull black silk lying in a curve behind her; her beautiful figure, in a tight-fitting, sheath-like gown of the same silk, showing plainly under a loosely hanging over-dress of some fine, transparent black material, weighted with balls of jet, and sparsely relieved with embroideries of the same substance.

She looked grave, but she did not look cold; there was a steady directness of gaze in her big blue eyes, which filled the young man with a sort of rapture of confidence in her integrity, her purity.

As he turned, she spoke.

"You need not throw away your cigarette," said she. "My husband was a Russian. The Russians smoke always—even the ladies."

She spoke in a very low and perfectly musical voice, but very slowly, and with a slight and peculiar accent. She seemed to Lord Robert to be listening to her own words, as if anxious to speak with as little foreign accent as possible.

"And do you smoke, then, princess?" asked he, ashamed to find that he almost stammered, and that he was as much at a loss as a school-boy, now that his supreme desire was unexpectedly fulfilled.

"No, not by habit. I have done so, of course; but I do not now. The prince loved England, and I try to make myself an Englishwoman while I am in the country where he lived."

The words themselves, the grave repose with which they were spoken, filled Lord Robert with a strange content.

"I—I'm very glad to hear you say so," stammered he.

There was a moment's pause, while the princess looked steadily at the livid majolica Cupid that was pouring water from a yellow cornucopia. When she spoke again, it was without raising her eyes.

"I hear you took my part rather rashly, a few days ago. Is it true?"

Lord Robert did not know what to say. He had begun the first words of a somewhat incoherent answer, when Princess Paul, raising her eyes, cut him short.

"Ah, I see it is true," she said, gravely, without a smile. "You were wrong. It is rash, in a great, cosmopolitan society like that of London, to take the part even of a woman you do know. If you go about, Lord Robert, like a knight-errant, taking up the cause of those who are complete strangers to you, you will come to grief."

She was almost stern in her gravity, and Lord Robert was overwhelmed.

"I was sorry, deeply sorry for what I did, the moment it was done," he said, in a tone of sincere self-reproach, and with lowered eyes.

What was his amazement when the princess, suddenly changing her tone, cried, in a ringing voice, and with a countenance as full of animation as up to then it had been impassive:

"Sorry! I'm not sorry! I'm glad and I'm grateful!"

The young man's heart seemed to leap up. His eyes met hers once more. In the glowing brown eyes of the man there was not more fire, more passion, than there was in the beautiful blue ones of the princess. They sparkled with that crystalline light which belongs only to the passion of the blonde; her whole face seemed transfigured, lighted up by the feeling which possessed her.

But, the moment his eyes met hers, she seemed to remember her old self, her old mask of stateliness; and, with a smile which seemed artificial by comparison with that glowing look of the previous moment, she said:

"It was absurd of you, Lord Robert, but I like absurdity. You know my

friend, Lady Barrs. She wishes you to come and see us. We are living very quietly, of course. But she would like you to come; and I should like it, too."

Then, with an inclination of the head more regal than any gesture he had ever seen in a royal personage, the princess turned away and glided, her long black train lying in serpentine folds behind her, back into the house.

The young officer was in a state of rapture that cannot be described. No reasoning could explain the hold this beautiful woman already had upon his heart, his imagination, his very soul. Not merely was he dazzled by her physical beauty, but he had received an impression of straightforward sincerity and depth of feeling, in that short interview, which no insinuations, no rumors could disturb.

And there were plenty of rumors about her, as he found to his intense annoyance. Since she was a Slav by birth, why had the prince never appeared with her at the court of the Czar? Why had the prince been so notoriously jealous, when her attitude in London society had been discretion itself? Why, again, had he been in the habit of periodically carrying off his lovely wife to a gloomy house in the heart of the Lake country, to which it was known she went with extreme reluctance? Why, above all, was the body-guard so strong and in such constant attendance?

There was one other mystery even more disturbing than these, and it was forced upon Lord Robert's notice very unpleasantly, on the afternoon when he made his first call at the princess's town house.

The door was opened by the same young footman who had been in attendance upon the princess at Ranelagh, and there could be no doubt that he was more than half-tipsy, for he stumbled up the stairs as he preceded the visitor, and announced him in a wholly unintelligible manner, and with an unmistakable insolence which made Lord Robert long to kick him down the stairs.

The princess, also, appeared to notice the condition of her servant, but she said nothing, only betraying what she felt by one of those strange flashes of the eye which, with her, denoted suppressed passion.

The incident had perhaps disturbed her; for it is certain that she appeared silent and preoccupied during the young officer's visit, and left the entertaining to Lady Barrs and Miss Egerton, both of whom Lord Robert was beginning to dislike, he scarcely knew why.

Certainly, it was on account of no lack of kindness and civility on their part toward himself. They vied with each other in doing him honor, and, although, perhaps, they were actuated partly by the wish to take the duty of entertaining off the shoulders of their patroness, there was an air of sincerity about the manner of both, which made Lord Robert think they were not merely kind to order.

Lady Barrs, in particular, he watched without appearing to do so, puzzled by her attitude toward himself and the princess. There was something disquieting in those furtive glances which she cast so often at her patroness. What made her so anxious? Why was she so gently persuasive, leading the princess laughingly back to the tea-table, and drawing her into the conversation, when she would have preferred to remain silent?

Although the princess, as well as Lady Barrs and Miss Egerton, warmly begged him to come and see them again, Lord Robert had a vague feeling of disappointment as he went away. He did not know exactly what he had expected; but the princess had seemed to lift the veil of ceremony she habitually wore, for one moment on their first meeting, and he had hoped to see something more than that beautiful mask in her own home.

As it was, he carried away only a remembrance of beautiful rooms, so artfully furnished that they looked cozy in spite of their size; of the scent of many flowers; of the presence of

half-a-dozen small, Pomeranian dogs, and of a silent, majestic, coldly gracious goddess in black, with satellites in black, too.

Two days later, he was walking along Piccadilly on his way to his chambers, when he heard his name uttered in a voice he knew, but would rather not have heard. It was that of Sir Gilbert Atheling, and there was, so the younger man noted with vexation and vague alarm, an air of subdued triumph about the old roué which boded ill.

"Ah, Tarring, you're the very person I wanted to see!" was his greeting to the young officer, who had in vain tried to avoid him. "Will you come around to my place this evening? I have something important to tell you. I dine at eight; only ourselves, and——"

"Thanks. I'm sorry I can't come. But I've an engagement I can't break," said Lord Robert, who was, however, too straightforward a man to tell the lie convincingly.

The elder man smiled a little.

"I'll excuse you from dinner, then, but you must come in later—say, about nine. It's important, and I must insist."

Lord Robert would have persisted in his refusal, but there was that in the baronet's manner which alarmed him, and caused him to end in giving a reluctant assent.

At nine o'clock, therefore, he arrived at Sir Gilbert's house, a small one in one of the streets of Piccadilly, and was immediately shown into the famous room on the first floor where Sir Gilbert had a collection of armor, tapestries and old china, which was one of the choicest of the smaller collections of London.

But Lord Robert was in no mood to admire. The armor and the Dresden, the Worcester and the Sèvres might have been theatrical properties, for all the notice he took of them. And, when Sir Gilbert came in, genial and urbane, after a very good dinner, his guest turned to him abruptly, and told him, looking at his watch and

speaking very coldly, that he would be glad if Sir Gilbert would let him know what he wished.

"Certainly, I will. Sit down." And the baronet indicated a high arm-chair, that might have come out of a Spanish palace of the Middle Ages. "We had an unfortunate little discussion a short time ago, when I, anxious to do you a service, only succeeded in making you think I was both prejudiced and censorious."

His visitor, who had sat down, leaped to his feet again.

"If it is anything connected with——" he began.

But, before he could stammer out another word, Sir Gilbert, in an imperious manner, insisted on his reseating himself.

"You owe me a hearing," said he, briefly, as the young man bit his lip, and tried in vain to hide the emotion which had seized him.

And, as he spoke, the baronet touched the button of the electric bell. Then, in dead silence, the two men waited until a man-servant opened the door.

"Send the person up," said Sir Gilbert. The man disappeared, and there was another short silence.

When the door opened again, it was to admit a young man in dark clothes, whom Lord Robert immediately recognized as the footman whom he had seen in the service of the Princess Paul. The man was quite sober, but he looked nervous and ill at ease. Lord Robert was furious.

"I wish to hear nothing——" he began to stammer.

But, again, he was cut short.

"In justice to me, you must hear," said Sir Gilbert, sharply, at the same moment turning the key in the door, and then putting it in his pocket, to the evident alarm of the trembling servant, to whom he turned at once. "You were in the service of the late Prince Dimitrovsky," said he, "for some years before he died, were you not?"

"Ye-e-s, sir."

"And he kept you in his service, in

spite of insolence and insobriety and laziness on your part?"

The man moved uneasily, but he mumbled, "Yes, sir," with his eyes on the ground.

"And he left directions that you were still to be kept on in the household after his death?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have been so kept on?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

There was no answer.

"It was because of something you had found out about the princess, was it not?"

The man had no time to reply. Lord Robert was across the room in two strides, and had his hand on the man's throat.

"If you utter a word against the princess, you lying rascal," said he, low in his ear, "I'll throw you out of this window!"

And, with one clever turn of the wrist, Lord Robert dragged the gasping wretch to the open casement, and, with his left hand, ran up the spring blind, and made a passage for himself and his victim between the silken curtains.

III

THE man gasped for breath under the violence of Lord Robert's attack; and Sir Gilbert Atheling, alarmed at the scene he had brought about, and, too, perhaps, as uneasy concerning his priceless brocades and medieval furniture, hurried after the pair, with a flushed face and nervous manner.

"Come, Tarring, control yourself! You have no right to attack the man. If you have any cause of quarrel, it's with me. Let him go, and let him speak."

"I'll not let him speak!" cried Lord Robert, giving the unfortunate man another shake. "I'll not let him tell any lies in my presence, and I'm simply amazed that you could expect anything but lies from such a fellow."

But his victim was looking up at him with imploring eyes, and gesticu-

lating with his hands, as if to crave a hearing. Lord Robert slightly relaxed his grasp, and, looking down at him sternly, said:

"Well, what is it you have to say?"

He had understood, better than his host, the meaning of the man's mute appeal. The baronet, as soon as the man was free, hastened to encourage him, after his own fashion:

"Speak out, and don't be afraid. Remember, he dare not hurt you, for all his threats. I'll see that you're not ill-used, and that you're properly compensated for this."

The man was pulling himself together, and, as he did so, he gave a frightened look, first at one, and then at the other of the two men. But, the moment Lord Robert moved toward him, he broke out, quickly:

"Let me speak, sir; let me speak! You'd better hear what I've got to say." And, turning to Sir Gilbert, he added, "I'm going to tell the truth, nothing but the truth. You've paid me to speak, and I will."

Then, seizing his opportunity, the man placed himself behind one of the great Spanish arm-chairs, reckoning that this solid obstacle, and the person of the baronet, would form a sufficient barrier between him and his nimble assailant. Then, at a word from Sir Gilbert, he went on:

"It's true the prince kept me on, and left directions that I was to be kept on, whatever I did. And the princess put up with me till the day before yesterday, when she sent me away suddenly, with three months' wages instead of a warning. And then I came to you, Sir Gilbert, because I'd heard of a row in which you spoke against the princess, and I thought I had something to tell that you'd pay to hear. And you did pay me, and told me to come here to-day, and here I am."

Lord Robert turned to his host, in contemptuous amazement.

"And you can pay to hear the tittle-tattle of a discharged servant!" cried he, shortly.

"I'm willing to pay to open the eyes of a young fool who is running his

head into a noose," said the baronet, as shortly as the other.

"I'll hear nothing of your friend's kitchen tattle," said Lord Robert, "and, if he attempts to repeat it——"

One menacing step was enough for the footman, who stretched out an imploring hand over the back of the protecting chair, repeating, energetically:

"Wait a minute, sir! You'd better hear." And he rattled on, in a breathless manner: "It's true the prince kept me on because he thought I knew something. *But I didn't*. It was just a chance bit of luck that, one day when some of us had been gossiping about the princess and the mystery there was about her, made me say I could tell something about her if I liked. The prince heard me, and he called me, asked me no questions, but told me he liked discretion in his servants, and, if I was discreet, I should never know what it was to want. And an easy enough berth I've had of it ever since, till I got careless, and, in a rage, the princess gave orders two days ago that I was to be sent away."

"Nonsense, man! We're not going to believe that story!" said Sir Gilbert, sharply. "Tell us what you know. No harm shall come to you for telling the truth."

"It is the truth, as sure as I stand here, Sir Gilbert. Why, if I did know anything, I'd tell it fast enough, after being turned off like that."

Both gentlemen could see that the man was now, indeed, as he said, speaking the truth. Lord Robert was half relieved in the midst of his disgust, but Sir Gilbert was irritated by the position in which he had been placed.

"Why on earth didn't you invent something, then?" he asked, contemptuously.

"Because, if I'd hit upon the wrong thing, I should have given myself away; perhaps, got myself into trouble," replied the man, simply. "No, when I got the sack, the game was up, and it only remained for me to come and tell you what I have told you. If you're so anxious to

know something against the princess," he went on, with cool effrontery, "why, what I've told you is enough to show that there is something, though I myself, living in the very house with them, have never been able to find out what it is. So there, sir," and he turned toward Lord Robert, "you ought to be satisfied, for I've said nothing against my late mistress, and I don't know anything to say. And you, Sir Gilbert, must admit I've earned the ten pounds you gave me, for I've told you enough to please your ill-nature, and I've had a throttling into the bargain."

The baronet unlocked the door without a word, and the man hurried down the stairs. Lord Robert, also in dead silence, followed him slowly. There was nothing to be said, and the result of the interview had been satisfactory to no one of them. The secret of the princess—and it was impossible to doubt that there was a secret—remained a secret still.

But it was not prudence, it was shyness, that kept Lord Robert from calling again at the princess's house, as he would have liked to do. His infatuation was as strong as ever, if, indeed, the underhand means by which Sir Gilbert had tried to injure the reputation of the princess in his eyes had not increased the force of his passion for the woman, whom all circumstances combined to render supremely interesting. It was not, therefore, until ten days after the interview at Sir Gilbert's that he met Princess Paul again, and then it was only by a happy chance. He was leaning over the railings in the Park, close to the drive, one afternoon, when the princess's landau was detained, by the press of carriages, close to where he stood with his friend, Eridge.

The princess, looking as lovely as ever, was, on this occasion, accompanied by Miss Egerton, who sat humbly on the opposite seat, looking about her with that funny little air of conscious grandeur which was in such strong contrast with the

straightforward, unaffected simplicity of her patroness's manner.

It was Miss Egerton who saw Lord Robert first, and directed the princess's attention to him and his friend.

Princess Paul turned, and a slight flush appeared on her face as she bowed and smiled, and then held out her hand.

"I have seen you often with your friend. Introduce him to me," she said.

Lord Robert was surprised and pleased. He had seen her, on several occasions, driving by and not appearing to notice him; and this admission that she had seen him filled him with satisfaction.

Eridge, on his side, was delighted at this graciousness, for no stories, no rumors, had ever shaken the hold the beautiful and rich Princess Paul had taken upon London society, and this introduction would be something for him to boast about. She gave the two young men a gracious invitation to come and see her on her next "day," and, too, she presently told Lord Robert that, if he were to go to the opera that evening, he might come and see her in her box.

And then her expression changed a little, the mask of stately indifference seemed to fall off, and she added, in a lower voice:

"Do come. I wish it."

It is needless to say that he was at the opera that evening, and that he presented himself early in the princess's box. She had both "dragons" with her, and he fancied he noticed on her face a look of feverish unrest, under the outer mask. Her eyes seemed to burn, and, in her voice, there was a note of impatience, subdued, indeed, but none the less real.

She was in the shade of the curtain, in full view of the stage, but concealed from the other occupants of the auditorium, and she sent Lady Barrs away from the chair beside her, and invited her visitor to take it.

Before they had exchanged more than a dozen formal words about the weather, the curtain went up on the

act, and the princess at once turned away from him, and gave, or affected to give, her attention to the stage, with only these words, almost fretfully uttered:

"Stay, if you please."

He could not see much from where he sat, except the profile of the princess, with the beautiful underlip twitching from time to time; the back view of Miss Egerton, who kept irritating time to the music with her prim little head; and the enigmatic face of Lady Barrs, who sat back in the worst place in the box, listening immovably in rapt attention, but always with the air of missing that fancy work which was never out of her hands when she was at home.

It was not until the curtain went down again that the princess turned to him, with a sort of sigh of relief.

"You love music?" said he, more because he could not think of anything better to say than because he wished to know whether Princess Paul, whose musical tastes were well known, was really fond of what she was understood to adore.

Her answer took him completely by surprise.

"Not particularly," said she.

"I—I thought——"

She smiled a little. "Oh, yes, everybody thinks that," she said, interpreting his thoughts; "and everybody is welcome to think what they please—except my friends."

She did not look at him as she uttered these last words, in a slightly lower voice, but there was something in her tone which made his heart leap up. It was simply, gracefully, almost pathetically gentle and kind.

The blood flew to his head; a sort of sob rose to his lips, and, at the same moment, she turned her head, and met his eyes. There was a strange curiosity in her look, a vivid interest, which surprised, delighted him. The thought crossed his mind that she seemed to be searching for something, and wondering whether she had found it. Was it possible that she, the rich, beautiful, much-sought-after queen in London

society, was asking herself whether she had found in the love she could read in his eyes something she had hitherto missed in life, something worth having?

He was encouraged to hope, and the feeling in his heart was reflected in the expression of his handsome, bronzed face, in his honest eyes. But, before he could find anything to say, anything which he dared say, she glanced furtively and quickly at the body-guard, and then looked at him with a sort of warning in her eyes, and intimated, without a word, that she did not wish him to speak of that which was in his heart.

Then, she rose, and, complaining of the heat from the footlights, which indeed did not reach her, she stood at the back of the box, using her fan with a grace that further enchanted Lord Robert, and looking down with grave eyes.

Lady Barrs glanced around, and Miss Egerton half-rose, as if to ask if there was anything she could do for her patroness. But the princess, with a petulant movement of the hand, commanded them both to remain where they were, and, at the same moment, turned impatiently to Lord Robert, who was now standing beside her.

"You are not like the men I meet in London," she said, looking up at him swiftly, and then looking down again. "You seem to have nothing in common with them."

"I have one thing in common with all the men who know you," said Lord Robert, ashamed of himself for having said anything so commonplace, and ignorant that the tone in which he spoke removed all triteness from the words themselves.

The princess smiled. "Of course, I know what you mean," said she. "But I don't agree with you. I'm not ungrateful to the others, but I don't agree that you feel just as they do. And I certainly do not feel toward them as I do toward you."

The words were flattering and charming, but there was something in her tone which prevented Lord Robert

from being carried away by the delusion that they meant all he would have liked them to mean. He said nothing, therefore, but his agitated silence was eloquent enough.

"Now, I don't feel in the least sorry for them," she went on, in that very low voice she could assume when she pleased, which kept their conversation out of the reach of the two pairs of ears that were so near them. "But I do feel sorry for you. I would rather not have caused you pain. And love," she went on, in a sort of dreamy tone, as softly as ever, as she played with the little black-lace fan, "is pain. Oh, I know!"

Her tone startled him. She was not vehement; but there was a depth of sincerity in her look and voice which touched him to the quick.

"Have I no chance, then?" he was hurried on into saying, in spite of himself, his voice trembling.

"None, none at all!" said she, in the sweetest, but most determined, manner in the world, as she closed her fan with a little, decided snap, and looked him full in the face.

"I see! Some one has been luckier—than I?" ventured he, hoarsely.

"Don't call it 'luck,'" said she, earnestly. "It is not that. We will not talk about it. There is another thing."

"Another obstacle?"

"Yes, yes!"

"If only you cared, there could be no obstacle," said he, scarcely knowing what impelled him to go on, in the face of her very prompt, though gentle, rebuff.

"You must be satisfied to know that there is one—a wholly insurmountable one," said she.

He stood back, his face pallid under the tan, his eyes haggard and glassy. The princess gazed at him, and there came a look of kindness into her blue eyes which prompted him to make another appeal.

"Might there some day be a chance for me?" he said, in a very low voice. "I would wait a long, long time. I feel that I ought not to have spoken

so soon. It was scarcely right, scarcely decent. But, when I am with you, I forget so much, so much that I ought to remember. Will you forgive me, and let me hope?"

She shook her head, gently. "I cannot do that," said she. "It would not be kindness. I could not treat you so. No, no, you must take my answer. But—is it of any use to ask you to remain my friend?"

"I would do anything, anything to please you, to serve you, to deserve your friendship," stammered Lord Robert, eagerly.

"Thank you. I believe you would, and I am glad. For I am so miserable, more miserable than any one would believe possible; and——"

He looked at her in astonishment, but, even as he met her gaze, he saw something in her face which told him these were not mere words. There was a restless, hungry look in her blue eyes, the look of the woman who has found no happiness in life. Again, the mask was lifted for a moment, and he seemed to read the secret of a weary soul.

"If I only could——"

That was all he said, but she understood.

She glanced quickly from his face to the body-guard. Then, she turned to him again.

"Do you mean that—that you would do anything for me?" she asked.

"Try me."

"Would you help me out of—prison?"

"I'd get through stone walls for you, go through fire and water for you! Don't you understand?"

"I don't want you to go through fire or water or the walls of a fortress, but through something much harder. I want you to evade a guard which is armed with something worse than bullets."

"Explain, princess."

"I am imprisoned," said she, speaking in a lower voice than ever, with her eyes fixed on those two middle-aged heads, now nodding in time to the music, which had commenced

again. "Without help, I can never get free. I must drag the chain of my lonely life forever. I must beat against the bars without pause, without rest." And her hands began to play nervously with her fan, the sticks of which broke under her trembling fingers. "That is what I am going through. Will you help me to escape from that?"

Lord Robert was rather frightened. A horrible thought flashed through his mind as he saw the somber fire that began to burn in the princess's beautiful blue eyes. Was she mad? The next moment, however, the look of superb scorn which she flashed upon him struck him with shame at his suspicion.

"You are afraid, of course," said she. "Because you don't understand—because you haven't the course I wish to pursue marked out in black and white before you, you hesitate, you draw back, you refuse!"

Lord Robert recovered himself. He loved her so passionately, he was so completely under the spell of her beauty and her charm, that, reckless of consequences, he was ready to risk anything to please her.

"I do not refuse," said he, steadily. "I will do anything for you, as I said."

Her manner melted into softness and gratitude, at once. She gave him a smile that set his heart throbbing and his nerves tingling, and then threw a cautious glance at the two nodding heads.

"Don't let them think we have been discussing anything in particular," said she, and, laying her hand on his arm, she invited him to lead her back to her seat in the corner of the box.

Lord Robert's brain was on fire. What was it that he had pledged himself to do?

IV

FROM the moment when Princess Paul resumed her seat behind the curtain of the box, and again devoted her whole attention to what was taking place on the stage, Lord Robert

was conscious of a change in her attitude toward himself, and in the attitude of the body-guard. Instead of remaining stolidly silent, as she had done during the previous act, the princess turned to him, from time to time, with a whispered word of approval, or disapproval, of the singing. And, few as were her words, there was a difference in her look, in her manner toward him, which was at once noted, both by Miss Egerton and Lady Barrs.

These ladies, watchful as ever, now kept their heads discreetly turned toward the stage, with never a glance at either the princess or her companion; yet the latter was conscious, all the time, that not a movement of their patroness, not a smile or a whisper, escaped their notice.

This surveillance made him slightly uneasy, in spite of himself. He glanced more than once, with a slight frown, in the direction of the vigilant ladies, and, at last, Princess Paul noticed this, with a rather mischievous smile. However, she made no comment until the performance was over, when, having detained him until then, she allowed him to arrange around her shoulders her cloak of black silk, heavily veiled with lace and trimmed with jet, and permitted him to lead her down the corridor.

Once outside the box, she hurried her steps in order to get well ahead of her two obsequious companions, and then whispered to Lord Robert:

"I do delight in mystifying those two dear old ladies, don't you?"

"They irritate me a little, I confess," said he. "Why do you have them so constantly about you? Surely, it's not necessary, or pleasant, either."

The princess shrugged her shoulders slightly, and laughed a little. Lord Robert was amazed at the change in her since the beginning of the evening. Her languor, her indifference, even some of her dignity, seemed to have disappeared, and there was a touch of something like a child's pretty petulance in her tone, as she answered:

"Oh, it was the prince who wished them to be with me constantly at the

first. How can I do anything but submit to what was his wish, even if it is disagreeable to me? Remember," she added, quickly, "I came to England as a stranger, when I was very young, so that I was entirely in his hands. And a child I seemed to him to the end."

"I see," said Lord Robert, "and, of course, I can only admire your motives; but I think the good ladies must be a bit of a trial sometimes."

"Oh, they have their uses," replied the princess, with another slight shrug of her pretty shoulders, "and I love to tease them when I have nothing better to do." She turned to him with vivacity. "I do beg you not to gratify their stupid curiosity by telling them anything to help them guess what we were talking about in the box, this evening."

"Do you think it possible I should?" replied he, quickly; "I, who hold your confidence more sacred than anything in this world?"

Her expression changed, and a swift look of emotion, which might have been self-reproach, passed over her face. Then, with an impatient little gesture, she said:

"Remember, I keep you to your promise. You won't forget that, will you?"

"Forget!"

"Well, I take it that you will not forget. Come and see me to-morrow—early, before there is a crowd of people whom I hate."

"Do you really hate anybody?"

She turned upon him a steady look. "You remember our first meeting?" she said, quietly.

"Indeed, I do."

"Did I give you then the impression of being a woman who could feel nothing?"

"No. You gave me, with one look, the impression that you could feel very deeply indeed."

"When one feels strongly," said the princess, slowly, "what are the emotions one feels first?"

"First," replied Lord Robert, promptly, encouraged to boldness alike

by her words and her manner, "comes the feeling I have for you."

"And next," rejoined she, quickly, "comes the feeling you would have for any one who kept you away from me when I wanted you to come."

It was unnecessary for him to assent to this, for she wanted no answer. The steely flash of her blue eyes showed that she was living over again the emotions which some bitter blow to her own feelings had caused her to experience.

They were standing close to the bottom of the stair-case; and the princess's footman, who had espied her on her first appearance, now came up to announce that her carriage was at the door. The body-guard, too, was close behind; and a touch of the hand, a kindly glance from the blue eyes, a reminder that he must come to-morrow, were all Lord Robert received before he saw the carriage drive away.

He was uneasy, restless; it seemed as if the fever the princess had had in her veins, in the earlier part of the evening, had infected him.

What did he fear? What did he imagine? He did not flatter himself that the princess loved him; she had been too candid for that to be possible. Yet, he had found himself, suddenly, on a footing of confidential friendship with her, which puzzled while it gratified him. What was this service that he had pledged himself to perform—this imprisonment which she had urged him to break through for her? Was it not a figure of speech merely, a passing caprice, born of the natural ennui and impatience of a beautiful young woman who had been forced to seclude herself, for a long time, from the gaieties of the world?

This, surely, was the only possible explanation of her strange words. Yet, even as he told himself so, Lord Robert recalled the feverish intensity of her look and manner, and was in doubt again as to her meaning.

On the following day, he took care to obey her mandate to come early; but all the reward he got at first was the pleasure of a long conversation

with Lady Barrs and Miss Egerton, as the princess herself was not yet visible.

If, however, they had been cordial before, the two elderly ladies were now almost affectionate. And, although at first they did not, in so many words, congratulate him upon his place in their patroness's good graces, they implied it so openly that he was not surprised when Miss Egerton asked him if, after his adventurous life in Africa, he would not find it difficult to settle down into the humdrum existence of domestic life.

"I have no thought of doing so yet," said Lord Robert.

But the smile on the faces of both ladies showed that they did not think it necessary to believe him. He decided at once that the princess had been amusing herself at their expense, but the delusion which she had evidently encouraged in their minds was one he had no wish to disturb. Nothing would have pleased him so well as for it to become a reality; and, when the princess came in, more radiant than ever, in a semi-transparent black tea-gown relieved by a mauve orchid on the breast, he was quite prepared to enter into the joke, if joke it was, and to accept her graciousness toward himself as an earnest of something more to come in the future.

Indeed, her attitude throughout the afternoon gave him every reason to hope that she would not long remain as obdurate as she had pretended. When her friends came in, as they presently did in considerable numbers, the princess at once put Lord Robert in a position different from that of the rest, by those small and subtle ways in which a spoilt woman openly seals the devotion to herself of the man she elects to favor. She ordered him about; she alluded to his presence with her at the opera; and, finally, she asked if he would take her to the Botanical Gardens in the following week.

Intoxicated, scarcely believing in the good fortune which he yet could no longer doubt, Lord Robert was able to conceal his surprise, but not his satisfaction. And, when he left the house, as

he had to do earlier than he wished, on account of a business appointment, he was in a state of such intense excitement that the voice of his friend Eridge, whom he had seen in the princess's rooms, but to whom he had not spoken, came with a chill and a shock on his excited nerves.

"Hello, Tarring! Where are you off to, at such a rate? And why did you cut me dead in the princess's rooms, just now?"

"Cut you? Did I?" repeated Lord Robert, absently, as he lingered a moment for his friend to come up to his side.

"Yes. It was rather pleasant, when I'd been boasting to Maud Ditchingham of my old friendship with you, and she was envying me for it, and calling you a hero and all that stuff, making me proud of you and jealous at the same time, to find that you stared at me as if you'd never seen me before, when we at last came face to face!" said Eridge, in an aggrieved tone.

"Why didn't you come up and shake me?"

"Didn't like to. You didn't look as if you would have approved of the process. I say, old man, are we to congratulate you?"

Lord Robert flushed and frowned. "No," said he, shortly. "I wish you were, but you're not."

"Really?"

"Really. Why?"

"Oh, well, if so, I'm very glad. But——"

"What do you mean by, 'You're very glad'?"

"Oh, well, of course, I'd rather see you marry an Englishwoman."

"That's not what you meant," said Lord Robert, irritably. "You've been chattering about the princess with that little, spiteful Ditchingham girl."

"There's no gossip about her, at any rate," said Eridge, sharply.

Lord Robert was on his guard in a moment. "I suppose not. People don't gossip about nonentities."

"Well," said Eridge, suddenly gathering up his courage, "I'd rather hear of your marriage with a nonentity

than with a woman who is talked about."

Lord Robert, who had been hurrying his steps, forgot his appointment, forgot everything but this slur upon the woman he passionately loved.

"I forgive you for saying that, Eridge," said he, "because we're old friends, and I know you mean well to me. But, unless you accept my assurance that Princess Paul is everything a woman should be—and you may accept it unhesitatingly—and unless you promise to uphold that view of her whenever and wherever you may hear gossip about her, you must consider our old friendship dead and buried."

And he looked into the light eyes of his friend with a piercing glance that showed him to be in earnest.

"Do you mean that, eh?"

"I do. Look here, Eridge. I own I'm in love with her, as I never was with any woman before. But I'm not a fool, for all that. And I can tell you this: she is more frank, more honest, than any woman I ever met, and I'd stake my life on her being good, good right through, in the face of every gossip and scandalmonger in England."

Eridge nodded, slowly. "All right," said he, quietly. "That settles it, then. I'll take your word and your conditions. And I only hope we may persuade the nonentities to accept them, too," he added, dubiously.

"Oh, we'll snap our fingers at them, presently," said Lord Robert, as he shook his friend by the hand, and hailed a hansom.

He had reason, so he felt, for the buoyancy of his tone, for the assurances Princess Paul had given him on the previous evening, that there was no hope for him, could not weigh much against the open encouragement she had given him that day, and the smiling, congratulatory manner of the body-guard.

He was rather surprised that the two elderly ladies should take his good fortune so good-humoredly, since they could scarcely doubt that, upon her marriage, their period of easy service

would come to an end. However, he did not intend to worry himself about that; and, when he called again, nervously afraid that he might be intruding too soon, only three days later, he was delighted and relieved to find that both his hostess and her companions were as cordial as ever. And the princess herself fixed the day when he should come to take her to the Botanical Gardens.

It was soon after four o'clock that they started together in the princess's brougham, Lord Robert taking, for once, the place of the body-guard, who both smiled upon him as sweetly as ever. Princess Paul, who was dressed very simply for so smart a function as this royal bazaar undoubtedly was, had said very little to him, but she was perfectly gracious, and she looked as handsome as ever, although he remarked that she was paler than he had ever seen her.

Before they had gone far, she said, abruptly:

"I'm going to get rid of the brougham; it will be much more fun to take a hansom, won't it?"

He was rather surprised, but, of course, he was ready to agree to anything, and she went on, after a moment's thought:

"I have to call at the Charing Cross Hotel, to inquire for some friends who were to come over from Paris last night. I'll send the carriage away when we get there. And then I sha'n't keep you waiting a minute."

So, she carried out her plan, and they both got out at the door of the hotel, where she directed the servants not to wait for her, but to take the brougham back home. Then, she turned to enter the hotel; but, the next moment, she checked herself, and said quickly to Lord Robert that she had left her purse in the pocket of the brougham.

"It's all right," said he; "they've not gone far. I'll get it for you."

A minute more, and he had run across the yard to the outer gate, where the princess's carriage was waiting its turn to pass out. He told the footman

what he had come for, and the man opened the carriage-door, found the purse, and gave it to him. But, by the time Lord Robert got back to the door of the hotel, the princess had gone inside.

She had said she would not be more than a moment, so he waited for the first few minutes, patiently enough; but, when he had been there a quarter of an hour, he went within to make inquiries.

Nobody had taken the princess's name; nobody remembered to have seen her. Lord Robert, feeling rather uneasy, waited again for a space. He had been chafing for an hour when the porter, who had been very busy with arrivals and departures, had a little leisure, and presently addressed him.

"Are you waiting for a lady dressed in black, sir?—a very tall lady?"

"Yes," said Lord Robert. "She went into the hotel an hour ago."

"Oh, yes, sir, I remember. She went in, but she came out again immediately, and went through into the station."

"Thank you," said Lord Robert, shortly.

Why the princess had treated him like this, he could not imagine, but he saw that he had been tricked. He made one incursion into the station, looked around the bookstalls, along the platforms, but there was no sign of Princess Paul. She had evaded him on purpose, he felt sure.

Deeply hurt, disgusted, enraged at this treachery, he walked out of the station, unable to think clearly, or to tell whether he was most offended or wounded by this unaccountable and mysterious vagary. Even his love seemed at first to be scarcely proof against this last, and most serious, assault. All the stories afloat about her crowded into his mind, all the rumors which he had refused to listen to now took substantial shape and drove him to the verge of madness. One moment, and one only, he wavered, and found his step, turning in the direction of her house. The next moment, he had braced him-

self against this weakness, and, to put vacillation beyond his power, he went to his rooms, packed a Gladstone bag, and left town for a couple of days.

On his return, he was told that a lady, whose face was closely veiled, who gave no name, had called to see him on the day he went away, and had been much agitated at hearing of his departure. The lady was not tall, and apparently not young, and Lord Robert guessed at once that it was either Miss Egerton or Lady Barrs who had endeavored to see him.

It was in vain that he tried to persuade himself that every trace of the passion he had felt for Princess Paul had evaporated since his discovery of her treachery. It was in vain he made preparations for another journey, further away, this time, in order that he might put many miles between himself and the temptation of falling again under the great spell of a woman who could trick and deceive him. This very evening, three days after that on which he had last seen her, he found himself wandering on foot in the neighborhood of the mansion which she and the late prince had made so celebrated by their entertainments.

It looked less brilliant than usual, he thought. The many lights which the princess loved were not burning; the great façade looked bare and gloomy.

He hesitated as he passed the great portico, and, when he looked back at the house, he saw that some one was peering out from behind the raised corner of one of the up-stairs blinds. Walking briskly on, determined that he would not be waylaid by a possible emissary from the princess, he was nevertheless overtaken, just as he turned out of the square, by some one far fleet of foot than either Miss Egerton or Lady Barrs.

However, the plaintive cry, "Oh, monsieur!" behind him caused him to turn, and he saw the princess's French

maid, panting and hatless, on the pavement, a few steps away.

He steeled himself against the message which he expected to hear. No doubt, Princess Paul had given orders that he was to be told some story which should bring him back. Once more in her presence, she could, he did not question, count upon her own fascinations to draw him again into that state of vassalage to her whims from which her own conduct had released him.

"Well," said he, coldly, "what do you want with me?"

She answered, quickly: "You know who I am, milord? I am maid of *Madame la Princesse*. I see you pass, I run after you. Lady Barrs, she come to your house t'ree days ago, but you were gone. We want you to help us to tell where the princess is gone."

"Gone!" echoed Lord Robert, in horror and amazement; "gone!"

"Yes, gone, gone!" said the girl, with her finger on her lip. "But do not cry it out so loud. We say she is ill; we say she can see no one. And we hope, oh, we hope and pray, she may come back! But she is gone, milord, gone right away, and we do not know where! Oh, milord, help us, help us, if you can! We love her, and we would not have harm come to her! Oh, milord, what do you know? Tell me, tell me!"

Shocked, bewildered, sick at heart, Lord Robert turned back with her, saying, hoarsely: "I know nothing at all, nothing. Great heavens, what does it mean?"

V

LORD ROBERT was stupefied by the news.

Gone! disappeared! lost! Princess Paul, the beauty, the richest widow in London, had melted out of the sight of her friends, leaving no trace behind! He could scarcely believe it, and, but for the earnest entreaties of the little French maid, who kept imploring him to return to the mansion with her, and to see Lady Barrs and

Miss Egerton, he would have looked upon the girl's story as a trick, a fiction.

But there was sincerity in her look and tone, and he could not but give credit to her tale, in spite of himself. So, the end of it was that he found himself walking slowly back toward the house, where he came upon Lady Barrs herself, waiting for him, under the portico.

She greeted him without words, but with a welcoming pressure of the hand, and led him up-stairs to one of the rooms he knew so well, where Miss Egerton sat moping in a corner, and the Persian cats and the little Pomeranian dogs lay curled up on their cushions, or ran about among the chair-legs, just as they had done when their stately mistress had sat in the deep chair by the window-curtains, which had been her favorite seat.

Lady Barrs looked sixty, so haggard was she. Miss Egerton glanced up with red eyes, and came trotting across the room, uttering little moans and sighs as she approached the visitor.

Lady Barrs made no attempt to keep up the fiction that the princess was in the house, but ill.

"Tell me where you lost sight of her," she said, in a low voice, after taking care to open the door, and look out again, before she spoke. "I came to ask you what happened on Thursday, but you had gone away, they said. Now, tell us everything."

"There's very little to tell," said he, gravely. "The princess said she wished to send the carriage home, and to take a hansom, and that she had to call upon a friend at the Charing Cross Hotel."

"Ah!" cried Miss Egerton; "then, we must have inquiries made there."

"You will learn nothing," said Lord Robert, quickly. "It was only a blind. She got out, sent away the carriage, and then told me she had left her purse in it. So, I ran after the brougham, and, when I came back with the purse, she had disappeared. I waited an hour, and then the porter told me he had seen her go in, and

go out again, immediately, and through into the station. That's all I know. But here is her purse; I've carried it about with me ever since."

Lady Barrs took it, and shrugged her shoulders.

"It was not the one she always used," said she, shortly. "It was part of her plan for getting away." And she sat down, and clasped her hands, the picture of despair.

"But where has she gone?" asked Lord Robert.

The two ladies merely exchanged a glance, and then Miss Egerton left it to Lady Barrs to speak, and Lord Robert saw at once that he would hear only some concocted tale.

"Back to Poland, probably," sighed Lady Barrs, "on some wild philanthropic expedition. She is the best-hearted——"

"Then, why, if you know where she's gone, and why she's gone, do you keep up this fiction of her being here still, too ill to see anybody?" he cut in, shortly.

The two poor, guilty ladies looked down, and said nothing. Seeing that their distress was genuine, he was sorry for his abruptness, and added, more gently:

"If you think it worth while to confide in me to the extent of admitting she is not here, why don't you tell me all you know? Then, I could be of more use to you than I possibly can be while you tell me only stories which—well, which seem a little too improbable."

Miss Egerton moaned, and Lady Barrs tried to draw herself up in dignified protest against this rebuke.

"One has to be guarded, Lord Robert, in discussing such an affair," she said, primly. "The princess is young and impulsive, and a little inclined to be headstrong, also. But the fact is we really haven't a notion where she can be, but we do know she sometimes felt the restraints of her rank irksome to her, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we could keep her from wasting her energies, her money and her personal

cares, upon the writer of any begging-letter who could get up a tale sufficiently moving to enlist her sympathies."

Lord Robert listened with interest, wondering how much of this was true.

"And you think she is engaged upon some expedition of charity now? Would she have the heart to keep away from you without a word?"

"No, I'm sure she would not," replied Lady Barrs, while Miss Egerton joined in the cry. "And that's why we are all afraid something dreadful has happened to her, and——"

"Then, why don't you inform the police?"

But, to this inquiry, neither lady made any reply. Both bowed their heads suspiciously, and looked diligently at the carpet.

"At any rate, I suppose you have informed her lawyers?"

They both looked up again.

"Oh, yes, we did that, of course."

"And what did they say?"

"They said she was her own mistress, and we could do nothing," said Miss Egerton, impulsively.

Lady Barrs frowned her into discretion and silence, and Lord Robert rose to go.

"Then what can you expect me to do?" said he.

"Well, we knew she liked you; we thought you might have some influence with her, and we hoped——"

Lady Barrs could not go on. It was all a little mysterious, a little bewildering. But, through it all, Lord Robert had a dim consciousness that the princess's secret, whatever it might be, was one these ladies knew, and, also, that it was one which did not put her beyond the pale of their sympathies. It seemed to him that they were both pleading to him in their voices and in their eyes, as they thus confessed they had counted upon his influence with her, his affection for her.

But he could merely shake his head.

"I only wish I had influence with her," said he. "But how can you suppose such a thing, when you know how she has tricked me?"

Lady Barrs sighed, and Miss Egerton wiped her eyes.

"Perhaps," quavered the latter, "this is only a ruse of hers—she is very wilful—to try the depth of your love for her, Lord Robert!"

He turned toward her, smiling rather grimly. "And do you know any man whose affection for any woman would be proof against such treatment?" he asked, abruptly.

Miss Egerton sobbed.

"Will you, then, give her up—break it off?" she asked, timidly.

"I can't break anything off, because there's nothing to break," said he.

Both the ladies uttered little exclamations of astonishment and dismay.

"Then, you were not engaged to her?"

"Oh, no!"

Lady Barrs looked grave. And the unlucky Miss Egerton made another blunder.

"But she certainly likes you," she said, earnestly. "She told me herself she had had only one love in all her life!"

Lady Barrs bit her lip, and Lord Robert could hardly help a rather bitter little smile.

"Unfortunately, I am not the lucky man," said he.

"Then, who can he be?" exclaimed Miss Egerton. "We know all her friends, and certainly she knows no one she likes better than she does you."

"Perhaps, she can keep her secrets better than she pretends," said he, drily. "Indeed, I think you must concede that she has kept this one very well." And he held out his hand to say good-bye.

"And you won't make an effort to find out where she has gone?" asked Lady Barrs, anxiously, while Miss Egerton looked the same request through moist eyes.

Lord Robert hesitated, and a flush came into his bronzed face. "I don't see by what right I could take any action in the matter," said he.

"You have the right of affection,

at least," suggested Miss Egerton, sentimentally. "And, oh, if you could only bring her back, you'd save us from ruin, at any rate."

This sudden confession was rather startling, and Lady Barrs tried to modify it, but without any great success. Lord Robert left them, much puzzled, and scarcely knowing whether he was more eager to be away, out of all this confusing mystery, or anxious to plunge more deeply into it. For, in truth, this visit to the princess's home, the sight of the things and persons he had been accustomed to associate with her, had roused afresh the dormant passion in his heart, had made him restless and uneasy, and ready to risk something in an unknown voyage of discovery.

Before he reached the end of the street, he met Marie Duchaine, the maid, once more.

"I have wait for you, milord," said she. "I wait to ask if you are going to seek her Serene Highness."

"I don't think I can do anything," said he. "You maids know all the secrets of your mistresses, don't you?"

"Not all, milord."

"I suppose, though, you know more than those two poor ladies?"

"Oh, zose!" And Marie tossed her head. "It would be a very stupid girl, who did not learn more zan zey can!"

"Then, you ought to know that I am nothing to the princess."

The girl put her head a little on one side, and considered his face, attentively.

"Sometimes, I zink zat yes, sometimes I zink zat no," said she, at last. "I could tell you somesing, milord, if I liked."

"Well!"

"Ze princess had a letter ze morning of ze day she went away. It was in a man's handwriting, milord, and it make her cry. It was from Greenwich."

"Did you tell the ladies that?"

"Yes. And milady Barrs she go down to Greenwich, ze day before

yesterday, but she find out nosing. I go yesterday, but I find out nosing. Will you go, milord?"

"How could I hope to find out anything, where you two ladies have failed?"

"Perhaps, ze little mouse might show herself for you, milord, where she would not for us," said Marie, slyly.

Lord Robert looked thoughtfully on the ground. He was rather annoyed to find that he was not more master of himself than to wish to go on this fool's errand.

"It's no business of mine," he said, shortly. "As the ladies have to admit, the princess is her own mistress; no one can stop her from doing what she pleases."

"And, if she is in danger, milord, what zen?"

"What danger can she be in? She is not a child."

"Ah, is she not? I have my doubts about zat." Perhaps, the shrewd Frenchwoman guessed that she had said enough to rouse the interest she desired in the young man's breast, for she drew back a step, and said: "I must go, milord. But zink of zis: she is young, she is good, she is in danger. I will say no more. Good-bye, milord."

And she turned and ran quickly down through the darkness, toward the princess's great house at the corner of the square.

Of course, Lord Robert went home telling himself that he had done with Princess Paul, that she was an artful and dangerous woman, and that no man in his senses would think of having any more to do with her, after the discovery of her very questionable and erratic proceedings.

Equally, of course, he spent the greater part of the night thinking about her, worrying himself about the mystery attached to her, and asking himself what earthly reason or excuse he could have for concerning himself with the doings of an artful coquette, who, escaping from the surveillance very wisely put upon her vagaries by

her late husband, had used a lover's devotion to no better purpose than to hoodwink him for the indulgence of some singular and mysterious caprice.

And, on the following morning, equally, of course, he went down to Greenwich.

As he had no very precise data to go upon, it is not surprising that he had a blank day. But he persevered, stayed the night there, and explored the purlieus of that unromantic neighborhood with a zeal and an enthusiasm of which he was, in truth, even a little ashamed.

But it was not until the third morning of his stay, in the overgrown and shabby suburb, that he came at last, just as he was deciding to return to town, upon something like a trail.

Into one of the dingy side-streets where the smaller shops are, he saw a tall young woman disappear, and, although he knew that it was not Princess Paul, there was something about her dress which he seemed to recognize, and, following her into the side-street, he ascertained, to his intense astonishment, that, although she was not only not the princess, and not in the least like her, she was undoubtedly wearing the very same black gown which Princess Paul had worn the last time he saw her.

Of course, he looked at her again, and, as he looked, the woman seemed to become suddenly conscious that she was watched, and turned to meet his eyes.

He then saw that she was not ill-looking, but of a coarse and rather vulgar type, with large features, and dark hair cut short and dyed so badly that the original color could be seen close to the roots, except in the front. There was a sort of defiance in her expression, mingled with uneasiness, and Lord Robert decided at once that he had got on the right track.

But the woman was aware that she was watched, and, when she had done some marketing in the little side-street, she disappeared into one of the shops, and did not come out again.

He made some excuse of a small purchase to follow her in, but, as he had half expected, she had disappeared altogether, and an open door at the back of the shop showed the means she had taken to get away.

There was nothing for it but to wait and watch again, but it was not until three days later, in the evening, that he saw her once more.

He was staying at one of the big, old-fashioned hotels by the river's bank, and it was from one of the windows that he saw the tall woman with the dyed hair go quickly past with her little basket; and, as she passed, she exchanged a nod with one of the barmaids at a small public-house not many yards away.

Lord Robert hurried into the little bar, and asked the girl who the tall woman with the short hair was.

"Her name's Tebbit," said she, "and she does something at the music-hall here, now and then. Her father's one of our best customers. For a wonder, he's not here to-night," she added, as she looked around.

Lord Robert was more and more puzzled. Clearly, this woman was no relation of the princess's, as he might have suspected, if the type had not been so utterly dissimilar. What, then, was the meaning of her appearing in the princess's dress?

Without much difficulty, he found out where the woman with the short hair lived, and then he set out in search of the house. It was one of a long row in an old-fashioned and dingy street, and there was nothing to distinguish it from the other dwellings. He knocked at the door, and, after a short delay, it was opened by the very woman of whom he was in search.

Her face showed both surprise and alarm, he thought; and he, at once, advanced a step so that she could not shut him out, as she at first seemed inclined to do.

He began, boldly: "Does Princess Paul live here?"

The woman stared at him, contemptuously. "Does who live here?" she asked, after looking him up and

down. "Do you take this for Buckingham Palace, young man?"

"No, but I was told the princess was staying here, and——"

"Then, you were told wrong. I never heard of any such person."

"Isn't your name Tebbit?"

"Yes."

"And you live here with your father?"

"Yes. What's that to you?"

"Only that I was told it was with Mr. and Miss Tebbit that the princess——"

"I tell you I know nothing about any princess. There's nobody here but my cousin Polly and her young man, and, if you'd like to see them, they're playing draughts in the parlor." She jerked her head in the direction of the door on the right. "And, if you want my father, he's round the corner, at——"

Lord Robert interrupted her: "May I see your cousin?"

"Certainly. Polly," she called out, putting her head in at the door on her right, "there's a young man wants to see you."

"Tell him she can't see anybody," called out a masculine voice, sharply.

"I won't detain her a minute," cried Lord Robert, now so much agitated that his voice was hardly under control.

The next moment, a good-looking, but decidedly common, young man came out of the room, and stood looking at the visitor, with his hands in his pockets. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and had a short pipe in his mouth.

"And who may you be that can't take no for an answer?" growled he. "Nobody wants you here, and you'd best take yourself off as quickly as you can."

"Will you ask the lady——?"

"No, I won't ask the lady anything. And she ain't no lady; she's only Polly." And the young man turned on his heel, and was about to disappear into the room.

"But——" again began Lord Robert.

"Shut the door in his face, Emma," called out the young man.

There was a laugh from the room—a woman's laugh, which Lord Robert did not know. He staggered back a step, taken by surprise; for he had got it into his head that he should know the voice of the unseen woman in the room.

The young woman at the door took the advice given her, and seized the opportunity of her visitor's retreating a step to close the door.

But, as she did so, the street-lamp, close by, made a line of light on her large, rough hand. And, on the third finger, Lord Robert saw one of the diamond rings of Princess Paul.

VI

For the first few moments after he had been thus repulsed, Lord Robert stood bewildered and amazed, staring at the little house where he believed the Princess Paul to be, and asking himself whether he ought to believe the evidence of his senses.

Short as had been the space of time during which he saw the ring on the finger of the woman who had shut him out, he was sure that he recognized that ring, which was both handsome and curious, as it bore a large trefoil, containing a pearl, a diamond and an emerald, which he had often seen on the princess's hand.

He would not, therefore, at once give up the hope that he might discover the princess herself, concerning whose connection with these people he was naturally interested and curious. Although the gas was alight, the blinds of the front room were not drawn down, and Lord Robert stepped off the paved path, into the little flower-garden, and looked in through the window.

He saw a table, and the young man with the short pipe standing beside it on one side; he saw the draught-board with the pieces on it; and he saw, in one corner, a woman's print frock, not the sort of glorified print which the princess might have worn, but a common gown of ugly design and much faded, such as women in humble life

wear on washing-days. Who the wearer of this was, he could not make out, for she sat too far back in the corner.

As soon as the man inside the room caught sight of Lord Robert, he stretched across the little table, and pulled the blind down, roughly. There ensued an altercation, in which his voice and that of the woman with the short hair could be heard plainly, and another voice which could not be so easily recognized, but in which Lord Robert sometimes thought that he did, sometimes that he did not, recognize the tones of Princess Paul.

From words, the occupants of the rooms appeared to be coming to a personal struggle. For shadows began to appear upon the blind, the overthrow of furniture could be heard, and it was plain that a struggle of some sort was going on within.

Lord Robert tapped at the window, and called, "Princess! Princess Paul!"

Instantly, there was dead silence, and, a few moments later, he heard the door slam, and knew that they had all left the room.

He waited for some time, watching the house, and waiting for some sign of life. If the princess were really there, he thought, she must know that he was not far off, and, if she wished to see him, she would find means to let him know. But nothing happened until, an hour later, a respectable-looking elderly man came briskly up the street, and let himself into the house with a latch-key, so quickly that Lord Robert, who was on the other side of the road, had no opportunity of speaking to him.

On the following morning, Lord Robert returned, and shadowed the house again. By daylight, the little dwelling looked better than it had done at night. The tiny front garden was well kept, the curtains were clean; Mr. Tebbit himself, who came out at an early hour to tie up a straggling sweet-pea, was a fine-looking man of some fifty years, with enough resemblance to the young woman to be easily recognizable as her father.

Lord Robert crossed the road to speak to him; but the man was evidently on the watch for this, and promptly disappeared into the house.

When the tall woman with the dyed hair came out, as she soon did, with her marketing basket in her hand, Lord Robert noticed that she was not wearing either the princess's dress or ring. She stopped short, with a defiant look, as soon as she saw the stranger, and he judged it useless to question her further. All he could do was to make some more inquiries in the neighborhood about these people, the result of which was that he found that nothing whatever was known against either the father or the daughter, who had been living there some time, by themselves, or against the young man, who was the old man's son, and who had only recently come to stay with them.

Nobody had ever heard them boast of having rich relations or friends, and Miss Tebbit was an only daughter.

Nevertheless, Lord Robert noticed that, when he met the respectable Mr. Tebbit in the street, later, there was a watchful and suspicious look in his eyes, and that Miss Tebbit took the precaution of bolting the door of the house when she had entered.

So, he gave up all idea of making any more discoveries, and went back to town.

One thing he felt bound to do, and that was to give Lady Barrs the address of the house where he had seen the woman wearing the princess's ring; and he was on his way to the princess's mansion that very afternoon with this piece of information, when, as he was crossing the Park, between Stanhope Gate and Hyde Park Corner, he was surprised to see the princess's carriage, with the well-known green liveries, driving toward him.

Thinking that it must contain Lady Barrs and Miss Egerton, and that he might, perhaps, have a chance of giving his message without going to the princess's house, he went up to the railings, and waited for the carriage to come up.

What was his amazement when, a few seconds later, the landau, with its bright chestnuts, passed him, and he saw, sitting back in her usual place, and wearing a smart black hat and a large white feather boa, Princess Paul herself, looking as impassive and splendidly bored as ever.

The princess saw him, he was almost sure, for she had sharp eyes, and she was looking in his direction. But he would not see her; he, indeed, felt as if an avalanche had fallen upon him, so unprepared was he for seeing, in all the state of splendid dress and equipage and smart attendants, the woman for whom, only a few hours before, he had been hunting in the dingy, six-room house of a shabby suburban street.

He turned away from the railing, staggering slightly as he walked. His whole being seemed to be in a state of upheaval; he scarcely knew where he was or what he was doing, so strong, so terrible, was the effect of this surprise.

Although he could not doubt that the princess would have some story for him when he should meet her, he was by no means anxious to hear it. He was so filled with disgust at her trickery, at her wanton eccentricity, that he felt his passion for her swamped in resentment, and used every possible care to avoid a meeting with the woman who had held him so strongly in thrall but a few days before.

This was not easy, as he saw her every day, sometimes more than once. In the whirl of the London season, which was still in full swing, everybody went in the same direction, the wheel always went round the same way, and, in its revolutions, the same people met, day after day and hour after hour, either at Hurlingham, Ranelagh, the opera, the theatres, or at the fêtes, bazaars, dinners and concerts, which counted among the events of the season.

To dances, Princess Paul did not go, but neither did Lord Robert.

It happened very soon, therefore, that he found himself face to face with the difficulty of being constantly in the

presence of the princess, and of as constantly avoiding her. So, although he was very successful in his determined efforts, he, at last, found himself stalked and brought to bay, not, indeed, by the princess, but by one of her lieutenants, who, as he had little doubt, was sent by order of the patroness, to pave the way for a meeting.

Without being vain, Lord Robert knew very well that a woman does not willingly give up one of her slaves, and he had been so conspicuous in his devotion, and, indeed, had received so much open and public encouragement from her, of late, that it was not likely the princess would submit to his defection without making one effort to recover her supremacy over him.

When, therefore, he heard Lady Barrs's insinuating voice close behind him, at a smart charity concert which he had found himself constrained to attend, Lord Robert turned, with the feeling and, perhaps, something of the look of an animal brought to bay after a brave struggle.

"How do you do, dear Lord Robert? I began to think we had lost sight of you altogether. Have you been away again?" cooed the lady, with charming effrontery, as she held his hand, with quite an affectionate pressure, and looked up, with a welcoming smile, into his face.

"No, I've not been away," said he; "at least, not further than Greenwich," he added, rather viciously, for he began to understand that there was a strong desire abroad to let bygones be bygones to an extent which he could not permit.

"Greenwich!" echoed Lady Barrs, raising her eyebrows without a blush, as if hearing of that salubrious spot for the first time in her life. "Well, at least that has the merit of not being far off."

"No; it is very conveniently near, as Princess Paul would confess."

Lady Barrs looked still more surprised.

"The princess! Oh, I don't suppose she has ever even heard of it!

You forget she's a foreigner by birth, although she has identified herself so thoroughly with her husband's country."

"I'm quite sure, however, that she knows as much about Greenwich as she does about Poland," said Lord Robert, obstinately.

"Well, then, come and ask her," said Lady Barrs, composedly. "She is most anxious to see you; indeed, she's rather hurt by what she considers your neglect lately. You haven't been to see us for an age, you know."

"Oh, you forget, Lady Barrs, I was at Princess Paul's not much more than a week ago, when you were wondering what had become of her."

Lady Barrs laughed, affectedly. "Oh, but I don't count that as a proper visit," she said, briskly. "We were in the depths of despair at the cruel trick the princess had played upon us. And, if you had called the next morning, you would have found us just as jubilant as we were then low-spirited, for we had received a letter from the princess, dated from Hastings, telling us of the wild caprice which had seized her, to get out of our way for a few days' enjoyment of the sea air."

"Ah!" said Lord Robert, "and out of my way also."

Lady Barrs's manner instantly became extraordinarily confidential. "Yes, that's just what she feels," she said, promptly, "that you will never forgive her for giving you the slip in the outrageous way she did. But I told her I was sure you would never bear malice for the caprices of a beautiful woman, and you would not; now, tell me—would you?"

"Certainly, I don't bear the princess any malice," said Lord Robert, with a kind of fierce coldness. "At the same time, these Polish caprices are so different from any treatment which a countrywoman of my own would venture to administer that I'm sure you will understand why I never intend to obtrude myself upon the princess's notice again."

Through all her forced self-possession, he saw the real anxiety that instantly

appeared under Lady Barrs's artificial gaiety.

"You don't mean that, I hope and believe," said she, in an altered voice. "You certainly would not, if you could understand how deeply she feels, how remorseful she is for her behavior to you. Won't you, at least, come to hear her ask your forgiveness?"

"Oh, dear, no! I couldn't think of putting any woman through so painful an ordeal as that."

"But if she wishes it?"

"Not even if she wishes it," said Lord Robert, as, with an apology, he took advantage of the passing of a little group of people to retreat.

But he could not expect to be always lucky enough to escape from a woman who had made up her mind to speak to him. And it was with a thrill of strong emotion, which he tried in vain to master, that he heard the princess's voice close to his ear, one evening at Earl's Court, when he was sitting in the little enclosure of the Welcome Club, waiting for Eridge, who had promised to meet him there.

"No, don't run away," said the princess, as Lord Robert rose hastily from his chair, "I wish to talk to you."

She sat down on the chair he offered her, but he would not take the seat beside her, as, with a look and a smile, she invited him to do.

He knew very well, in spite of the self-possession with which she was carrying herself, that she was not inwardly quite as cool, quite as calm, as she pretended. There was a latent fire in her blue eyes, a certain uncontrollable restlessness in her look and in her movements, which betrayed her.

"You have been avoiding me lately, Lord Robert—oh, don't contradict me! I am not blind. You have been avoiding me, I say, openly, scandalously——"

"Oh, princess!"

"I repeat—it is scandalous to put upon me the affront of neglecting me before all the world, when everybody knows the footing upon which you stood with me a very few weeks ago."

Lord Robert regained his self-possession, and spoke very deliberately indeed.

"You won't deny, I think, that those weeks have been eventful ones."

"Very eventful," said she, softly. "One event—I think I may call it an event—in particular, comes back to my mind. You came to my box one evening, and we had a conversation. Do you remember?"

Standing up, Lord Robert felt that he was at a disadvantage; but he would not take that seat beside her, would not trust himself so near the level of her plaintive eyes. Yet, perhaps, the uplook from them, the view of her face slightly foreshortened, as she turned it up appealingly, was more plaintive, more dangerous still.

"I remember—perfectly—of course."

"I confided in you, did I not?"

He would not answer that. He was trying to keep himself at a proper white heat of indignation against her for her treachery, and wishing she would spare him those glances which were like stabs into his heart, putting him in the wrong, subduing him against his will.

"I spoke to you of my troubles; and I asked you to help me. You promised that you would."

Lord Robert moved, uneasily.

"I don't think I understood; I don't think," he said, almost fiercely, "that you meant me to understand."

The princess laughed a little, rather contemptuously.

"Ah, no! I remember that you wished to know exactly what it was that I expected of you; you wished a definite bargain drawn up, signed, sealed and witnessed. But, in the end, you appeared to yield a little on that point, and were ready to agree to help me without all the formalities of deeds and witnesses and the rest."

"I certainly did promise to do what I could, and I certainly meant it. But I did not suppose that the confidence you then appeared to place in me would be so abruptly withdrawn; that, in fact, your pretended 'confidence'

was no more than a trap to catch me, and to make a fool of me."

His tone was hard, almost harsh, and the princess looked frightened as she caught his eye. As a matter of fact, he was only hard from the fear that he might be too lenient, but she did not, could not, know this, and the sight of his firmly set lips and frowning brows made her put on an armor of her own. Drawing herself up a little, she said, in a cutting tone:

"Ah, it is only now I learn to know what Englishmen are, what their friendship is worth when a woman is concerned. My husband, the prince, was chivalrous, perfect in manners and in mind, to all women. But, then, he was a Russian."

"And you think a Russian would have submitted to the trick you played me, without a murmur or a doubt, princess?"

"I think he would, at least, have waited to hear my account of what I did before he assumed a manner to me which is almost, if not quite, an insult in itself," said she; and, as she spoke, a slight tinge of pink color came into her white cheeks.

"I suppose it is too much to ask that you should give me an explanation of your visit—to Greenwich," said Lord Robert; and, try as he would to keep his tone level, he was conscious that there was in it something like a sneer.

The princess shivered, so he thought, and did not at once turn to him. When she did, he thought she looked whiter than ever, as she said: "Greenwich! I have never heard of Greenwich. I went to Hastings."

He was too angry to contain himself. Without a word, without a look at her, he turned abruptly away and walked in the direction of the gate.

But, by this time, there was a stream of people coming in, and he could not get past them as rapidly as he wished. He had to wait, and, as he did so, he heard once more the voice of Princess Paul behind him.

"Lord Robert, you must explain your behavior to me. I insist."

There was no resisting her imperious tones, and, although the command, and the voice in which she uttered it, made him more furiously indignant with her than ever, he did move aside out of the crowd, and, standing beside her, close to her, suffered himself to be taken to task once more. But this time there was something in her face which he had missed before, a look of misery in her blue eyes which he could not meet.

"I am so unhappy," whispered she; "you would not be so hard, if you understood. Listen; I treated you strangely because I was in a crazy state—you must have seen that; because I could not trust myself to explain to you what I wanted to do. I get tired of all this life sometimes, of being in a sort of cage always. I told you that before; you seemed to understand then. Well, why can't you understand also that I wanted only a breathing-space, a moment to myself, a little rest from Lady Barrs, and good Miss Egerton, and—and all these people, and—and even from you and the charming, amiable men like you?"

"I can quite understand that you wanted a rest from me and my unwelcome attentions," said Lord Robert, who was sorry for these words the moment he had uttered them.

She drew herself up. "Well, I got a moment's breathing-space; and it was something," cried she, with a sort of defiance.

"At Hastings?" said Lord Robert, with blazing, accusing eyes.

She turned upon him, almost savagely.

"Yes, at Hastings," replied she, sharply.

They were both silent for some moments, and each could see that the other was trembling. Suddenly, the princess broke down into a sort of whimper.

"You will not come and see me again?" said she.

He steeled himself, and would not look at her.

"No, princess; for both our sakes, I had better not."

"You do not like me any longer?"

"I—I wish I could say that."

"Why—why do you wish you could?"

He felt himself yielding, slipping. He made a great effort.

"Because, princess," he said, "I prefer the woman who has only one personality to the woman who has two."

A sort of sob of horror, very low but very intense, broke from the princess's lips, and made him look around. He could have bitten his own tongue out with remorse, with contrition. For, close behind, in full hearing of this unfortunate speech to the princess, was Sir Gilbert Atheling.

There was a wicked smile on the baronet's face, as Lord Robert turned to the princess, and saw that she was not white, but livid and gray.

VII

LORD ROBERT scarcely knew what happened next. He knew only that the princess disappeared, that Sir Gilbert Atheling disappeared, and that the crowd seemed to grow thicker around him.

The first thing he heard distinctly afterward was the voice of his friend, Eridge, who plucked at his sleeve, and asked him if he was asleep.

Lord Robert roused himself, and looked around. The band was playing vigorously; the lights were twinkling among the little trees; people were laughing and talking and flirting within the Welcome Club barriers, and the same thing was going on outside, on a larger and somewhat noisier scale.

But there was no one near him whom he knew, and it seemed as if the terrible incident, which had almost bereft him of his senses were a dream.

He looked around at his friend, and suffered himself to be pulled down into one of the chairs near the railings.

"What's the matter, eh?" said

Bridge, looking at him, curiously. "What was it that happened—you and Atheling—and Princess Paul?"

Lord Robert started, and stared at him.

"Were you there?" he asked, hoarsely.

"I wasn't near enough to see or hear exactly what took place, but I saw that you and the princess appeared to be quarreling, that Atheling looked delighted, and that she took herself off, apparently much offended. That's all."

Lord Robert stood up. "It was my fault," said he, unsteadily. "I did say something that offended her, and hurt her, and that beast Atheling must have overheard."

"It's a mistake to have a lovers' quarrel in a place like this," said Eridge.

"It was no lovers' quarrel," said Tarring, sharply. "The princess and I are not even friends."

"Ah, I wish you were, though," said Eridge, shrewdly. "Friendship is a nice, safe platform to be upon; any other feeling is slippery ground. Indignation or anger, for instance, is a perfect quagmire, out of which one is pretty sure to flounder into the quicksand of love again."

"Not in this case," said Lord Robert. "I admire the princess; I even pity her. She attracts, interests me, but that's all. I'm sorry, though, that I said what I did in that man's hearing. It is not that I said anything that wasn't true, but that he's a man not to be trusted with the truth about any woman, no matter what the truth may be. He distorts it, and alters it in his pestilent mind. I would not have given him a handle to his malice, for the world."

"I shouldn't worry about that. If you hadn't given him a handle, he'd have found one."

"Yes, perhaps; still——"

"And I suppose you'll now feel bound to go and see the princess, to apologize?" suggested Eridge, with a sort of dismal resignation.

But Tarring answered, with great

vivacity: "No, I shall not. I said nothing but what was true, and no good could come of my apologizing. As I say, I'm sorry I was overheard; but it's done, and there's an end of it. Now, let's talk of something else. How are you getting on with Maud Ditchingham?"

He exerted himself to take an interest in his friend's affairs, and refused to be drawn into any further discussion concerning the princess; but Eridge felt rather uneasy about him, and was convinced, in his own mind, that the mischievous influence of the woman with a mystery about her was not destroyed.

And so it proved. Although Lord Robert Tarring went home with the firm conviction that he had done with the princess forever, and that nothing should induce him to trust himself again within the range of her appealing eyes, of her seductive voice and strangely attractive manners, it was not humanly possible for him to withstand the influence of the woman he loved still, without, perhaps, being conscious of the fact.

He told himself firmly that, whatever might be the secret motive of her strange conduct, whether it was an innocent freak, or something more serious, a woman who could treat a man as she had treated him was unworthy of confidence, and was too selfish to be capable of love such as he demanded in return for his own. He even went so far as to go away into the country to escape the danger of meeting her again. But the first wet day drove him back into town once more, and then he found himself more defenseless than ever when the princess came again in his way. There was a look in her eyes, a piteous, imploring look, which there was no withstanding; and the end of it was that, after a restless, disturbed night and a troubled morning, Lord Robert found himself, with a guilty, shamefaced feeling in his heart, and yet with a bubbling sense of joy at his own yielding, on his way to Princess Paul's house, one lowering, sultry afternoon.

It was not the princess's "day," and Tarring was quite prepared to be told that she was not at home. But, instead of that, he found himself admitted at once, and conducted up to that great room he knew so well, where the little Pomeranians ran to welcome him, and where he caught sight of the fluttering skirts of the two elderly companions of the princess, as they, no doubt by her wish, disappeared into the conservatory when the door opened, and Lord Robert entered.

The princess was sitting in her usual chair, with a Persian kitten in her lap. Her white hands were flashing with rings, but he saw, at once, that the large trefoil, which he had seen upon the hand of the woman with the short hair, was missing.

She was dressed in a white silk tea-gown, covered from neck to hem with yellow old lace, and Lord Robert, who had never before seen her except in black, was struck anew by the glory of her beauty, as she raised her head with a sort of languid haughtiness, which did not deceive him into thinking she was not glad to see him. For he saw by the trembling of her lip, by the deepened color of her blue eyes, that, if he was moved by this meeting, she was at least as much agitated as he.

She was scarcely as much mistress of herself as usual in her greetings, and he, on his side, was at a loss for words to express the feelings which had prompted him to make this unexpected and, in the circumstances, daring visit.

He had prepared several very excellent and judicious speeches to make to her. In each of them he had striven to express, in the neatest possible manner, the necessity he felt of making a sort of dignified half-apology for the incident at Earl's Court, which should yet leave her in the wrong, and force her to give him some explanation of her conduct. He had made up his mind exactly how things would fall out, what he would say, what she would say.

But, unhappily, he had reckoned without his own passionate delight at finding himself once more in her society,

and without the woman's wit of the princess.

So that, instead of launching out into one of his eloquent speeches, he found himself led, by the simplest possible means, to discussing the passing events of the day, the small scandals that agitated the circle in which they both moved, the successes and the failures of the waning season, just as if both had had no topic of absorbing interest to approach, no emotions in their hearts deeper than those of every day.

It was not, therefore, until he rose to go away, that Lord Robert determined to make one venture into deeper waters, retained a moment in his hand she gave him, and said, in a voice which was by no means steady:

"I'm sorry—for what I said—for what Sir Gilbert Atheling heard me say. Will you forgive me?"

It was hopelessly weak, hopelessly barren, this meek apology, after all his preparation, all his resolutions. But he felt that he could not, excited as he was by her presence, go without one word beyond commonplace, without one look from her eyes such as she would not have given to any stranger. Rather her anger, her reproaches, rather anything than this level of deadly commonplace.

The princess withdrew her hand sharply from his, with a little laugh.

"Oh," she said, with the slightest possible shrug of the shoulders, "how can you ask anything so absurd? What does it matter whether I forgive you or not? What does it matter whether Sir Gilbert overheard you or not? A woman, above all, a foreigner, in London society, lives in a glass house, is constantly exposed to idle gossip and rumors. If she has never learned not to care, when she has lived through it all as long as I have, why, let her retire into a convent, to a desert island, anywhere out of a world which is not meant for her."

Lord Robert was overwhelmed. All the pretty, appealing pleading which had moved him, stabbed him to the heart, on that night at the Welcome

Club, had disappeared. It seemed impossible to believe that this self-possessed, mocking lady, brilliant and superb, could be the same woman who had shown such depths of passion, such a moving, touching sadness, but a few nights before.

Now, she was hard, brilliant, as a diamond, and as cold. He felt abashed, powerless, under the keen, straight look of her blue eyes.

"Then—then, I am not forgiven?" said he, hoarsely. "I am not received, except on the footing of a stranger?"

"Oh, after having been received as I have received you, without even my dragons to mitigate the penance of my society," replied Princess Paul, with the same self-possessed calmness, "you can scarcely reproach me with that. But, if you please, we will have no more 'scenes,' no more confidences. You shall think of me just what you will, but you shall not trouble me with your thoughts, your suspicions. I am alone in the world, I stand like a rock—by myself—and I want no friends, no supporters!"

It was horrible to Lord Robert, who suddenly perceived, under all this bravado, some trace of the keen suffering which she had betrayed openly on more than one previous occasion. It made him remorseful, miserable beyond words. Doubts, suspicions, everything but his passion for this inscrutable woman, faded into the background. He could have knelt at her feet, to implore pardon for his own doubts, if her indomitable pride of bearing had not laid a sort of iron restraint upon him.

"You—you are unjust to me now," he mumbled out at last, in a low voice. "If I have been unjust to you, I am being punished, as I deserve."

Already, she had made a little gesture, as if the interview were becoming wearisome to her. But, at these words, she turned upon him with the air of an empress.

"You have been unjust," said she. "You have accused me of lying, of treachery, of deceit. You have come to me with incomprehensible tales of

people and places I know nothing about. You have insulted me in public. You have done everything to me that a man should not do to a woman, and a woman whom he has professed to love. And you are then surprised that I do not open my heart to you, as one would do to a dear and true friend. Lord Robert, you may be a very clever soldier, but you do not understand a woman."

"If I loved you less, I should understand you better, and perhaps treat you better," said he, suddenly, with frank simplicity. "As it is, I am rough, brusque, frank, when I suppose I should be subtle, cautious and discreet. Well, it can't be helped; I'm too old to learn women now, I suppose. I'd better give up all thoughts of it, and go back to Africa."

"Or find a woman whom you can understand without trouble; believe me, there are many such among your countrywomen. They might be cabages; and, at least, they are safe."

"I'll make no more experiments, thank you," said Lord Robert, whose spirit was beginning to rise under the pin-pricks of her scornful looks, "either in town or anywhere else."

She looked over her shoulder as she turned away.

"Not even in—what is the place—Greening, or Greenwich, or whatever you call it?"

"Not even in Greenwich or whatever I call it," said he, looking down, and biting his lip.

And so, with a wide gulf of irritation and anger showing itself quite suddenly between them, after the apparent reconciliation betokened by civil words and every-day phrases, they parted, and Lord Robert went downstairs in a tumult of passionate feelings.

A shock awaited him before he left the house. Standing within the doors of the mansion, arguing loudly with the servant in livery who was trying to bar his passage, was a young man, respectably, but not well, dressed, whose voice Lord Robert recognized even before he saw his face.

It was the young man whom he had seen in the little house at Greenwich, the man with the short pipe.

Lord Robert caught the words he was uttering, although the servant tried to drown his voice with remonstrances.

"But I tell you I will see the princess. I will and I must, and it will be the worse for you if you don't let me in," the young man was saying, confidently, as he tried to get past.

"The princess never sees anybody of your sort except by appointment," said the servant. "You've come from some institution, I suppose, or something of that sort."

"No, I haven't come from any institution," snarled the intruder, angrily. "Just you take my message, and see if the princess won't see me. Say I've come about Cousin Polly."

"You can write to her secretary, then, with your tale," said the footman, who at last managed, by a dexterous movement, to get the unwelcome visitor on the stone floor of the portico, outside the door.

Lord Robert went out slowly, and passed the young man upon the step. He turned slightly and met his eye, and the young man, red and angry, showed at once that he recognized him. Lord Robert had not got far down the street, at the end of the square, when he heard Tebbit's voice addressing him from behind:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but may I speak to you?"

"Certainly."

He turned to meet the man, who took something from his pocket, and said: "You're a friend of Princess Paul's, I know, sir. I'm very anxious to get a word with her, very anxious. I've written, but I can get no reply to my letters."

"But, if you've written unsuccessfully, presumably the princess doesn't wish to see you!"

"Well, but she must. It's important. I'm no blackmailer, sir, so you needn't look at me so hard."

"A relation, I suppose?"

"No, sir, no relation. But, look

here, sir, I *will* see her, and I must, even if I have to lie in wait for her, which is what I shouldn't like to do. If you'll get me a word with her——"

"But how can I, if she won't see you? I'm no relation of hers, either."

Young Tebbit looked at him in a peculiar fashion, out of the corners of his eyes, scrutinizingly, and paused before he answered:

"Well, give her this, sir, and this, and then ask if she'll see me!"

And, as he spoke, he thrust into Lord Robert's hand, not only the splendid trefoil ring which he knew so well, but a sheet of the plain, thick, white note-paper which Princess Paul used for her letters, upon which was written this line, in a woman's handwriting:

Of course, I will come. Expect me about six.

POLLY.

Lord Robert stared at the words.

The young man insisted: "Will you take her the ring, sir, and the letter? She won't deny her own handwriting. Will you tell her the person she sent the letter to asks to see her? That's all."

He spoke quietly, without any attempt at menace or violence. Lord Robert hesitated.

"And, if I were to give her these things, and she were still to refuse to see you, what then?"

Young Tebbit shook his head.

"I don't think she would refuse; I don't think she could," said he, so simply, so naturally, that Lord Robert suddenly made up his mind to help him.

"Well," said he, "if you are determined to see her, at any rate, I will tell her so. And, if she will not take this ring and letter, I'll return them to you. I'll go back and try at once."

"Thank you, sir," said the young man, who had been eying him with curiosity and a sort of subdued suspicion.

And the two walked back in silence until they reached the corner of the square. There, Lord Robert told the man to wait for him, and proceeded alone to the house.

Naturally, the princess, who was

now accompanied by the body-guard, looked surprised to see him return so soon, and, perhaps, there was a certain look of apprehension in her face as she waited for him to speak. Indeed, he was so pale, so diffident, that she might easily guess that something of moment had brought him back.

"I've come with a request to make, princess," he began.

"A request!" echoed she, with something like consternation in her tone.

"Yes." And, as he spoke, he drew from his pocket the ring and the letter, and held them out to her. "The person to whom you sent this letter wishes to see you."

For one moment, there was a pause. Although he did not see either of the elderly ladies, having eyes for no one but the princess, Lord Robert was conscious that they were both in a state of acute alarm. He knew this by a sort of feeble rustling of their garments, as if each limb of their poor, frightened bodies was quaking with agitation.

The princess looked at the ring and at the paper in his hand for some moments, before she held out her own right hand, quite steadily, and took both from him.

"This is one of my rings," she said, at last, with an accent as of intense surprise; "I lost it some days ago. Yes," she went on, as she turned it over in her hand, "I am sure it is mine. Who gave it to you?"

"The same person who gave me that letter."

She had been, or had affected to be, so much occupied with the ring that she had not looked carefully at the letter. She now read it through, half-aloud.

"Yes," said she, then, as she gave it back to him, "the ring is mine, but I know nothing about this letter. It appears to be written by some woman of the name of Poly—no, Polly—to some one who is not addressed by name. What has it to do with me?"

And she looked up quite calmly into his face.

"The person who gave me the ring says that you sent him the letter."

The princess drew her brows together in a puzzled way, and then began to laugh.

"But I don't understand," said she, at last. "My name is not Polly, and that is not my handwriting. Who is this mysterious person?"

"He didn't tell me his name. He is not many yards away from the house now. He asks if you will see him."

"Certainly, I will see him, for I want to know how he found my ring."

"I will tell him he may come."

The princess put out her hand to stop him, and there was a note of anger in her voice, as she said: "No, Lord Robert; you will please stay here. You have interested yourself in this matter; you shall see it through to the end. Miss Egerton, will you send Duchaine to bring this person to see me?" She turned sharply to Lord Robert: "Oh, what is he like? How is she to know him?"

"He is a good-looking, dark man, quite young, and he's wearing a gray suit and a soft gray hat. He is waiting at the corner of the square, on the right."

The princess, who never moved from her chair, leaned back to continue her directions to Miss Egerton, who stood looking as white as a ghost, near the door.

"Miss Egerton, you hear? Direct Duchaine to look out for such a person."

Miss Egerton opened her mouth, but seemed too much alarmed to speak. The princess rose impatiently and moved toward her.

"Send Duchaine to me," said she, "and I'll direct her myself."

Miss Egerton disappeared, and the princess waited by the door; while Lord Robert, feeling guilty but acutely curious, stood motionless by the mantelpiece.

VIII

MISS EGERTON tottered out of the room, with such a scared look on her

face that Lord Robert, disturbed as he was, could scarcely resist an impulse to smile.

Princess Paul still stood by the door, watching it, tapping one foot impatiently upon the floor. Lady Barrs, with her knitting in her hand, trembled so much that the needles rattled in her fingers.

Lord Robert caught her eye, and she then drew herself up and spoke.

"Men are very different now from what they were in my youth," said she, icily. "No gentleman, twenty years ago, would have dreamed of bringing a lady such a message!"

He drew himself up, in his turn. "I don't understand you," said he. "Do you really think it would have been better for me to have allowed this young man to waylay the princess, as he proposed to do, if he could not get his message delivered?"

Lady Barrs flushed a little, and Princess Paul looked around.

"Don't be absurd, Lady Barrs," she said, sharply. "I'm much obliged to Lord Robert for the trouble he has taken in this affair. It has, at least, given me as much pleasure as it has given him—this hunting out of a little mystery."

"It has given me no pleasure," he declared, stiffly.

"Oh, I think it has," retorted Princess Paul, holding her head very high. "It is not the first time, you know, that you have taken infinite trouble in the pursuit of a fact which has puzzled you. However, as it happens, I am really grateful on this occasion, for my ring disappeared in a very strange manner, and I shall be glad to know where and how it was found."

As she finished speaking, the door opened, and her maid, Marie Duchaine, whom Lord Robert remembered well, appeared in the room. The princess spoke to her rapidly, in French, in a low voice, and then turned to Lord Robert, and asked him to give the maid the full description of the man she was to bring in.

It amused Lord Robert, disturbed

as he was, to notice the exaggerated demureness with which the girl listened to him, looking straight into his face, with the air of being a perfect stranger to him, and bowing her head with decision when he had finished. Then, she withdrew quickly, and there was dead silence for some minutes.

The princess walked into the conservatory, where he could not see her face. After standing very still for a few moments, she returned to her favorite seat by the curtains, where, as the gray afternoon was now fading into cloudy evening, she was in shadow, and her face could not be clearly seen. Only her beautiful profile, outlined against the faint gray light, showed by an occasional twitching of the lower lip that she was not at ease.

It seemed a long time before the door opened again, and Marie Duchaine ushered in the young man in the gray suit. He looked much confused by his surroundings, and kept his eyes, after a brief voyage around the room, fixed upon the maid who had brought him in, and who regarded him with a certain veiled curiosity as she awaited her mistress's orders.

The princess's voice sounded harsh and displeased as she spoke. "Is this the young man who spoke to you, Lord Robert?" she asked.

Tebbit, who had evidently failed to see the princess, on his first look around, started violently at the sound of her voice, and took a backward step toward the door.

The maid, however, gave him a gentle push forward, and remained standing between him and escape.

"Yes," answered Lord Robert, "this is he."

"You may go, Duchaine," said the princess. Then, she turned to Lady Barrs, who had got up from her seat, and was moving noiselessly toward the conservatory. "Lady Barrs, you will stay, please. There will be talk, gossip, about this loss of my ring. You had better hear all there is to be said. Sit down, please."

Lady Barrs glided into the nearest

chair, and affected to be absorbed in her work. The unhappy Tebbit, meanwhile, was shuffling from one foot to the other, staring into the gloom where the princess sat, and then looking uneasily around him and at Lord Robert. "Come nearer," said the princess to him, and he moved forward, with a vigorous but futile attempt to look more at ease. Nothing was more unlike the look and attitude of a blackmailing adventurer than his whole appearance and manner. As he stood in the faint light that came through the tinted blinds, drawn across the roof of the conservatory, he looked the picture of misery and bewilderment.

"We will have some light, I think," said the princess. "Lady Barrs, perhaps you wouldn't mind—we don't want the servants in again, just yet."

"Oh, certainly."

Before the words were out of her mouth, the obedient Lady Barrs had touched a button in the wall, and, the next moment, the long room was in a flood of brilliant light.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more strangely incongruous than the figure of the awkward intruder, in his ready-made suit and thick boots, with his clownish air and his open mouth, in the midst of the glories of the Louis Quinze drawing-room, with its painted ceiling and its silk-paneled walls.

All the dazzling beauty of white and gold, of delicate tapestry, of tender-toned carpets laid on polished floors, of mirrors that reflected one another and dim vistas of unlighted rooms beyond, seemed to throw up in strong relief this piteous figure of the denizen of another world, as he stood, hat in hand, staring about him in a bewildered and lost manner.

The suddenness with which the light had sprung out of delicate ormolu brackets, between the panels of the walls, seemed to have taken his breath away. He tried to pull himself together, to look with the eye of a connoisseur upon cabinets of *verniss* Mar-

tin, upon a quaint grand piano with groups of fairy-like figures painted over the case, upon the banks of pink roses and feathery palms which stood in the corners; but the attempt was a failure.

And, when the princess, rising slowly from her chair, came sailing down toward him with the lofty air of an empress, her white silk gown trailing behind her, and the jewels on her hands and in her dress flashing in the artificial light, he fairly quailed before her, and began to twirl his hat about, and to stammer and stutter, even before she spoke to him.

Holding out toward him the trefoil ring, which had been brought back to her by Lord Robert, she said: "Tell me, did you find this, or was it given to you?"

The young man shot at her one sidelong look, and cleared his throat.

"I—I—it was given to me," he said, at last, in a thick, strangled voice.

"By whom?"

"By—oh, by my sister."

"And who is your sister?"

"Millie Tebbit."

"And how did she get it?"

"It was given to her."

"Well?"

"By—by a lady."

"Pray speak out clearly and intelligibly. You say this ring, which is, in fact, my ring, was given to your sister by a lady. A lady whom you knew?"

"Oh, yes."

"Whom you could identify?"

"Could—w-what?"

"I mean a lady whom you would at once recognize?"

"Oh, yes."

"What is her name?"

"She—she called herself—she said she was—Princess—Princess Paul Dimitrovsky," stammered out the unhappy young man.

"And you say you knew this lady?"

"Oh, yes. She—she—was going—said she was going—to—to marry me!"

The princess drew herself up, and

laughed a little, in contemptuous amazement.

"And you really thought that a lady who was a princess, a real princess—would marry *you*!"

The ineffable scorn in her voice, low as it was, made the young man flush scarlet. He hung his head, and made no answer.

"Now, I will tell you something," she went on, speaking with such cutting scorn and contempt that Lord Robert wondered how she could use such a tone to the humiliated wretch before her. "*I am the Princess Paul Dimitrovsky. Do you think I would marry you?*"

The young man looked up quickly, eyed her askance, and looked down again.

"Of course not," said he, in an awestruck voice. "*I—I—*"

"You have been deceived—you can see that. The person who passed herself off to you as Princess Paul Dimitrovsky, was some miserable trickster!"

"Yes," said the young man, with a flash of the eyes, "*she was.*"

"I am sorry for your disappointment," said the princess, not, however, as if she felt any emotion very keenly. "But it was better that you should find out the truth. Here is your letter"—she offered him the short note by which he had obtained access to her presence—"and here is the ring. Perhaps, it may be some consolation for your disappointment to be allowed to keep it. It is a valuable one."

"It was given to my sister," explained the young man again.

"Give it back to her, then. As for you, I should like to do something for you, too. You will probably have to submit to a dozen detectives, amateur and otherwise, who will wish to learn more; and, if there is no more to learn, they will want to be able to invent something."

Lord Robert, who, during this interview, had not moved from his position by the fireplace, now took a step forward, angry and hurt by the insin-

uation, which she uttered in a marked tone.

"You are very good," said Tebbit, humbly.

"Oh, no, I am not good; I am a creature of caprice, and it is my caprice to do something for you, now. What shall it be? Do you care for money?"

He hesitated, stammered, looked up, looked down. "I don't want to take your money, your highness," he said, in a stifled voice. "You—you know——"

She cut him short. "I shall not force it upon you," said she. "But, if ever you should want any, or any assistance of any kind I can give you, let me know."

"I did write," faltered Tebbit.

The princess turned and stared at him. "Ah, but that was before I knew anything about you," said she, simply. "Now, you are anxious to get away, I see. Lady Barrs, I'm sure you will not mind accompanying this person down-stairs. The servants don't know him, you see." She turned to the young man once more, and, with a little, gracious, but dignified, bend of the head, said, without a smile, "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, your—your royal highness," said Tebbit. And, without another look at anybody, he turned quickly, and hurried away with Lady Barrs.

Princess Paul came to the opposite side of the fireplace, and Lord Robert perceived, to his immense surprise and consternation, that the tears were close to her eyes. They were not allowed to fall, however. She laughed, rather artificially, and then said, with a superb air:

"I have satisfied you now, I hope. I have seen your friend, I have made him understand that he was the victim of a great mistake. It was amusing to see the poor fellow's dismay, when he found himself face to face with the real Princess Paul, was it not?"

"You think you have been impersonated by some one?" said Lord Robert, rather coldly.

The princess flushed slightly, and he saw that light come into her blue eyes which always shone there when she was much moved by any emotion.

"Of course, I think so," she replied, shortly. "What else can I think? The man himself evidently thought he had been in correspondence with, had been acquainted with, the princess herself. It was not until he was brought face to face with me that he understood how he had been deceived."

Lord Robert made ready to go. "You will, I suppose," said he, "have inquiries made as to this impostor, who is going about putting herself into positions which are so ridiculously incongruous?"

The princess, who had turned away her head, made a slight movement of anger and impatience. However, she only said, "Yes, it is a tiresome business, but I suppose I must."

"When it comes to taking your jewelry, and distributing it broadcast among people of this sort," went on Lord Robert, "the matter becomes serious, does it not?"

"Of course, it does. What would you advise?"

"Your secretary might communicate with the police." The princess shivered and turned very white. He hastened on: "Or you might consult your solicitors. Yes; probably that would be best."

He was ready, anxious, to go. The princess, however, detained him, with an abrupt movement of the hand.

"In the meantime," she said, "you will, of course, take care to spread this foolish story about, to discuss it with your friends, to laugh over it, and——"

Lord Robert came to her, and looked down into her face. The restless misery which he recognized under all her airs of indifference, of haughty amusement, touched him suddenly to the quick.

"You know better than that," he declared.

She turned upon him, fiercely. "How do I know better?" she said, passion-

ately. "You have played the spy upon me——"

"When? How?" he cried.

And, suddenly, she faltered and looked down—only for a moment. Then, like a petulant child, she made a gesture of annoyance and irritation, turning her beautiful head slightly away, and raising her shoulders, as if weary of the whole matter.

"Oh, if you have not done so, I apologize," she said, suddenly avoiding the passionate scene of recrimination and reproach which she saw was threatening. "And, after all, it does not matter. Indeed, I don't know why you came back, why you came to see me to-day, at all. All is over between you and me, long ago—friendship, sentiment, everything! You will remember that I told you it must be so. I did tell you, did I not?" Her eyes met his suddenly, brilliant, defiant.

He hesitated. "You told me so with your lips, but it was not until later I knew that you were in earnest," he made answer.

Even while he spoke, he knew that there was some deeper emotion than irritation or anger, something warmer, more passionate than pride, hovering about her, now coming to her lips, and now hidden away in her heart. And, in the face of this knowledge, he tried in vain to resume an ordinary conversational level, to bid her good-bye and to go away as an ordinary acquaintance.

That was the charm, the danger, of this woman, that under all her caprices, all her vagaries, there was always something real, something full-blooded, human, to be guessed and even seen. He might tell himself a hundred times that she was only a woman of the world, erratic and capricious beyond the wont of her kind, and utterly insincere and untrustworthy. But the moment he found himself again in her presence, he felt, rather than knew, that this was a wrong estimate, and that, whatever might be her faults, her defects, she was more sincere, more genuine, than the majority of women.

She answered him, now, in a tone gentler than she had been using.

"I am in earnest," she said, "quite in earnest, when I say that there is no friendship possible between you and me."

"Why not?"

"Because you watch me, suspect me! You—you——"

Lord Robert looked earnestly into her excited face. "And, if I do," said he, "you know why I do these things. It is because I love you."

"How dare you say so? How dare you call by such a name as love the feeling which prompts you to do everything in your power to hurt and annoy me? You knew that this man's coming would—would disturb, agitate, offend, me; and yet you forced me to receive him."

"No, you are wrong, princess. He told me he would waylay you if he could see you by no other means. I thought, therefore, that for your own sake you had better make terms with him at once."

"Make terms!" Again her eyes flashed, her face glowed. "You dare to suggest that there was any question of making a bargain with one who had a hold on me!"

"Not at all; I suggest nothing."

"Oh, but you do. Every word, every look, you have given me to-day, is meant to bear that interpretation. Well, Lord Robert, you have begun by playing the spy; you shall play it to the end. Go back to Greenwich, the place where you met this man——"

Lord Robert looked up and met her eyes, with a steady gaze. She faltered and stammered; for, indeed, the young man had not once mentioned Greenwich in the course of the interview he had had with the princess.

"Go on with your inquiries," she continued, after a moment's pause, in which she recovered herself; "question these people again, pay them, if you like, to speak, to invent tales to my discredit. You, who have begun so well by insulting me before Sir Gilbert Atheling, may well stoop lower yet. Go! But remember, you must not

bring me any more interviewers; you must be content to receive their information yourself; for I will not receive either you or your informers again."

And, with the air of an offended queen, she turned from him, as Lady Barrs, pale and agitated, entered the room.

Lord Robert took the opportunity to escape, and carried away with him the memory of a passionately beautiful face, which yet had a strange, yearning, piteous look in its anger.

He had been dismissed, he had been warned. It might have been thought that a wise man, brought face to face with such facts as those disclosed by the afternoon, would have made up his mind that this strange woman was a being to be avoided, and would have decided to try, at least, to efface the impression she had undeniably made upon his heart.

But it was not so. Besides the strong attraction she possessed in being different from other women, the princess had that other charm of quick sensibility, which made her interesting and sympathetic, as no coldly correct human being can ever be, so that, instead of extinguishing his love or his interest in her, the events of the day had but increased them. He took it into his head that the secret which linked her to the strangely incongruous people, of whom one had been in her presence to-day, must be an innocent, or, at least, not a guilty one. And, unable to restrain his craving to probe to its depths this mystery surrounding her, in the hope, too, that he might, perhaps, be of some real help to her in dealing with these people, he went down again to Greenwich on the following day, and made straight for the little house where he had seen the Tebbits.

But the house was shut up and empty; the Tebbits had gone away.

IX

LORD ROBERT felt that he had no cause to be surprised; but he was dis-

turbed and distressed by the disappearance of these people, whose connection with the Princess Paul was so puzzling. If they had been relations of hers, he knew the princess too well to suppose that she would have made any secret of the fact. And, even if she had been reticent on the subject, it could not be supposed that they would be loath to admit their connection with a woman of high rank. And, yet, he was as unwilling as ever to believe anything against the woman he loved in spite of himself.

A man who saw him standing at the garden-gate of the little house, volunteered the information that the Tebbits had gone away on the previous evening, locking the house up and not leaving word when they would return. Lord Robert looked bewildered by the tale, as well he might, and his informant hastened to explain. "They were just the sort of people to do that, sir," he said, "as I dare say you know, if so be you knew anything much about them. They'd been showfolk, or something of that sort, and always used to be on the move. So, their comings and goings wouldn't be like other folks'. Not as I've anything to say against them. They were good tenants—me and Tebbit had the same landlord—and they don't owe anything hereabouts, as I know of. They'll come back, as they went, I've no doubt. And, if so be you care to leave your address with me, sir, I'll be sure and let you know when they do come back."

By this obliging offer, Lord Robert guessed shrewdly that he had been noticed on his previous visit, and that he had set the neighborhood talking. Then, if, he argued to himself, he had been remarked, no doubt the curious eyes of the neighbors must have observed other remarkable visitors, with the same attention that they had bestowed upon him. So, he said:

"Thanks; I won't trouble you to do that. I'm sorry I missed them, though, for I'm a good deal interested in them. I was able to render the son, young Tebbit, a service the other day, and I might have been able to do more

for them. But they have other friends beside myself, I know—well-to-do friends."

The man looked up in frank inquiry. "Ah," said he, "there's nothing like that. I wish I'd got some!"

"They had a visit from one of them only a short time back," went on Lord Robert.

The man looked still more interested. "They kept it dark, then," said he. "We mostly know all about our neighbors' doings, but we haven't seen any grand visitors to the Tebbits, saving you, sir. They've kept to themselves, as they say, and I've seen nobody go in or out these six weeks, but you and a young woman, a friend of the daughter's."

Lord Robert concealed his own interest in this information. Could this "young woman," thus curtly described, be the dignified Princess Paul, whose bearing was as unmistakably aristocratic as that of Miss Tebbit was the reverse?

"A young woman!" echoed he, as casually as possible. "Do you mean another daughter of Tebbit's?"

"I didn't hear anything about her being his daughter—only a friend of the young woman's and of the son's."

"Do you mean a tall, fair-haired lady, dressed in black?" asked Lord Robert, ashamed of his own questions, and yet crazy with anxiety for the answers.

"Well, she had yellow hair, like Miss Tebbit's," answered the man, "and she was a good height, as near as I remember. But she wasn't dressed in black when she come here; she wore a brown ulster and a sailor hat."

"Yellow hair like Miss Tebbit's!" "A brown ulster and a sailor hat!" Lord Robert felt his spirits rise at this description, which could never apply to Princess Paul. He thanked the man for the information, and walked back to the railway station, much relieved, but more bewildered than ever.

On the one hand, if this chance acquaintance had spoken the truth, which there was no reason to doubt, it was plain that the woman who had

been with the Tebbits, on the occasion of his visit, was not the princess. On the other hand, the mystery about the whole affair grew deeper, for, if it was not she herself who had visited these people, and given them her ring and her dress, who was it? It seemed impossible that any man in his senses should have failed to be struck with the appearance and bearing of Princess Paul, even if she had been disguised; but, if the princess had a double, why did she not take steps to have the vagaries and even the thefts of this impersonator put an end to?

It came as a shock to Lord Robert when he found himself brought to book, that very evening, by Princess Paul herself, whom he met at the house of one of the season's millionaires, at an entertainment that was one of the features of the year, alike in its colossal costliness and in its equally colossal dullness.

The princess was holding a little court in a marquee, which had been erected, for the occasion, as an extension of the suite of drawing-rooms. It was a fairy bower of flowers and subdued lights, overpowering as to perfume and heat.

Lord Robert, who came upon the group suddenly, was annoyed, without justifiable reason, to see that one of the men nearest to the princess was Sir Gilbert Atheling, whose very attitude spoke a devotion that disgusted her truer lover.

The princess was in white satin, without any relief but a bunch of huge rosettes made of black tulle, with centres of magnificent diamonds. Around her neck, and hanging low upon her dress, were ropes of splendid pearls, and her fair hair was crowned by a tiara of diamonds and large white pearls.

"Ah, Lord Robert," cried she, detaining him as he would have made his escape, hoping himself unseen, "don't run away from me. I want to ask you how your investigations have been going on? Have you had better fortune at Greenwich this time than you had on the last occasion?"

As may be imagined, Lord Robert was overwhelmed by this address. He looked at the princess, who was more animated than he had ever before seen her, and then he looked down at the floor. "I am quite satisfied, princess," said he, "with the result of my visit."

"And what did you discover? Come, you must tell me, for you know that I am interested in the matter. Did you track my double to earth?"

Lord Robert looked up quickly, and saw defiance flashing in her beautiful eyes. She turned to Sir Gilbert Atheling and the other men near her. "You must know," she explained, "that I have a double, who has been masquerading in my name, if not actually in my clothes. Lord Robert has been kind enough to take great interest in the case, and has saved me all the trouble of going to Scotland Yard in order to have the impostor run to earth."

"I think you had better go to the police, after all, princess, for you are doing me more than justice. I have discovered nothing," Lord Robert retorted, recovering his self-possession, and speaking with more coolness than she.

"At least, I owe you thanks for trying so hard," she said.

"Who would not try hard in your service, princess?" put in Sir Gilbert Atheling. "If you wish this woman found out and brought to book, you need not trouble the police, unless you wish. Here are a dozen of us ready and anxious to do your bidding. Only say where and how we are to begin."

"Oh, for that you must apply to Lord Robert," laughed the princess, with another angry glance at the young officer, who was very quiet, but held his ground doggedly, and showed a certain obstinacy in eye and mouth—which the rest of the men present did not fail to note. "He can give you all the details of the case, better than I. Indeed, he appears to know more even about my own movements than I know myself; therefore, he ought to be able to record with equal

exactitude the doings of my double. I hope, Lord Robert, you have not found her out in any very heinous offense?" she concluded, with defiant malice.

"I haven't found her out at all," answered Lord Robert, steadily, raising his eyes for a moment to her face, and reading something there which made him lower them again hastily. "Perhaps, these fresh volunteers will prove more fortunate, or more able, than I."

"We don't doubt your ability, or your good-will," said the princess, with the same malicious manner as before. "It would help us if you would tell us exactly what it is my double has done that made you consider it so important to run her to earth."

Lord Robert flushed deeply. Everybody could see that there was some deep-seated bitterness between the princess and himself; and, indeed, his devotion had been so marked that there had necessarily been a great deal of gossip about the change which had evidently taken place in their relations to each other.

"She has done nothing, princess, that you would not do yourself, I am sure," said he.

The princess grew slightly paler, and did not at once reply. Sir Gilbert broke in:

"Princess, this adorable woman must be found. We have all thought there was no woman like you in the world. It is delightful news to us that there are two of you; we really must insist upon knowing where to find the other. Then, in case you treat us unkindly, we can revenge ourselves by crying you down and devoting ourselves to your second self."

"I think," said the princess, rising and affecting to laugh, "you will probably find this elusive person very little to your taste. But I agree with you that she must be found. And you, Sir Gilbert and Lord Robert, who have been the foremost in the matter, must be the first persons to

have an introduction. I shall interest myself in the chase, and you will both see this double, if, indeed, she has a corporeal existence, and does not live only in the exuberant fancy of her pursuer."

She broke away from the group, and, turning to Lady Barrs, who was, as usual, not very far off, she swept away, out of sight of her admirers, in the direction of the music-room.

Lord Robert was on the point of taking his departure, within a very few minutes of this unpleasant little episode, when he found himself, unexpectedly, once more in the neighborhood of the princess. He could not but think she must have found him out intentionally, for she at once dismissed her companion, and, by a look, compelled him to come to her.

"What do you want with me, princess?" he asked, hoarsely. "Surely, you have snubbed me openly enough and severely enough for one evening!"

"You have brought it upon yourself," said she, almost fiercely. "Why have you so persistently played the spy? Haven't I told you that I will not have anything more to do with you? Or is this your noble revenge?"

"If it is revenge," said he, in a low, earnest voice, "I am entitled to it. You have encouraged me, thrown the spells of your beauty and your charm about me, and, now that you throw me over and trick me and repulse me, I have a right to find out your reasons for this treatment—if I can."

The princess gave him one glance—an anxious one, he thought. But he went on, recklessly enough:

"You accuse me of playing the spy. Well, I admit it; I have played the spy, and, if I think I can find out the mystery which surrounds your treatment of me, I shall play the spy again. Nothing would have induced me to do such a thing toward a woman about whom I was indifferent—you know that. But you have possessed your-

self, whether with or without your will I don't know, of every feeling of my heart, of every nerve, of every fiber. You have grown into my being, you have crept into every recess of my soul. Of course, what I say is nothing to you; you have proved your indifference to me, over and over again. But it cannot alter the fact that you are still more interesting to me than ever a woman was before; and, since you have taken upon yourself gratuitously to deceive me, I take it upon myself to find out why and how you have done it—if I can."

The passion which surged up into his low voice, the fire in his eyes, the determination which was betrayed by his doggedly set mouth, seemed to overawe the princess, for she glanced at him, once or twice, in a manner more timid than her wont, and, when he had finished speaking, she first hesitated, and then answered, in almost a humble manner:

"You are right, I suppose. Men are always right, and women always wrong in their treatment of one another, aren't they? Well, never mind that; you need not answer me. Keep your lofty tone, if you please. You don't believe that I have a double, do you? You have a wild idea that I am two persons in one, that I wander about in dingy suburbs for the sole purpose of mystifying and annoying you? Oh, yes, you do! You have admitted it. Well, you shall see this double in the flesh—then you will believe in her, perhaps."

"Princess, you need not take this trouble. You, who have been so well able to trick me before, could certainly do it again."

"You may spare your sneers, Lord Robert. I tell you, your curiosity shall be satisfied. Will you come down to my place at Marlow next week, say, on Monday?"

"Marlow!"

"Yes; I have a little place there. Will you come?"

Lord Robert hesitated. "I think I would rather not," said he. "I

think I am going to Paris at the end of this week."

"Go to Paris at the end of next week instead," said the princess, peremptorily. "I will take no refusal from you. You have had a very full revenge, upon the whole, if I did treat you badly in leaving you at the station. I shall expect you. Good-bye!"

She was gone, without leaving him a chance of replying, of arguing, of persisting in his refusal. Lord Robert did not know, as he went home that night, whether he was glad or sorry that he was bound, as he felt himself to be, by this invitation.

But, on the following day, when he was with his friend, Eridge, in the Park, he had his proposed visit put before him in its true light, somewhat abruptly. He mentioned that he was going down to Marlow on Monday.

"Marlow!" echoed Eridge. "Where to? Who with?"

"Not with anybody. The Princess Paul has a place down there, and she's asked me to go."

Eridge threw his cigarette away. "Don't go," said he, shortly.

Lord Robert frowned, petulantly. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Why, that I've been very glad to think you were getting over that; and, if you go down to Marlow, where you'll see her more unceremoniously than you do in town, it'll be all over with you—and goodness knows what will happen."

It was a vague and colloquial way of putting it, but it expressed, pretty accurately, what Lord Robert had himself been feeling. It was a sort of crossing of the Rubicon, this friendly visit at a country house, where formality would be deposed, and where the princess would seem even more charming than she did in her stately mansion in town. But the fact that this was the truth did not incline the lover to listen more submissively to his friend's advice. On the contrary, it made him bristle up, as it were, and assert an independence which he knew he did not possess.

"Nonsense!" said he; "I've not been a season back in town for nothing. The princess and I have agreed to hate each other in the most cordial manner possible. And, in order that there may be no misunderstanding of the footing I am on, she has invited Sir Gilbert Atheling down there, too."

His friend saw that there was no arguing him out of his intention, so there was silence for a time. At last, Eridge asked: "By-the-bye, what's the name of her place there? I know all the big houses, but I don't know hers."

"I'm sure I don't know," said Lord Robert. "I suppose I shall only have to ask for Princess Paul's place."

"Oh, yes, of course; everybody there will know," Eridge agreed.

On the Monday following, therefore, without taking the trouble to inform himself further, Lord Robert went down to Marlow and made his inquiry at the station, in the most casual way in the world.

But, at the very outset, he was met by the astounding difficulty that nobody there knew anything about Princess Paul Dimitrovsky or her house. In Marlow itself, at the hotels, in the principal shops, he met with no more success. Nobody in the place seemed even to have heard of the princess, and one inn-keeper obligingly went over the names of the principal people residing in the neighborhood, proving conclusively that there must be a mistake somewhere.

Lord Robert, much annoyed, went forth in a very ill humor. He began to think either that he had made a mistake about the place he was to come to, or that this was a second trick which the princess was playing upon him. This last thought took instant possession of his mind, and filled him with such an extravagant sense of rage that he began to walk quickly in the direction of the station, at once deciding that he had been sent on a wild-goose chase.

At that very moment, however, he happened to glance up the street, and he was struck by a figure some dis-

tance away, which looked like, and yet unlike, that of Princess Paul herself.

It was the figure of a tall, well-made woman, apparently young, though her back was turned toward him, and he could not see her face. She was dressed in an old print frock, and she wore a sun-bonnet on her head, and carried a basket on her arm. In these circumstances, he could not very well understand how it was that she reminded him of the great lady whom he had always seen in the most exquisite and tasteful toilettes London or Paris could provide. Nevertheless, she did remind him of that queenly figure, and so strongly that, after hesitating for a few moments, during which he watched the woman as she walked slowly up the street, he turned and slowly followed her.

On her leisurely way she went, now making him laugh at his fancy that she resembled the princess, and then, again, reminding him by some movement, by something indefinable, of the woman he tried to persuade himself he no longer loved.

At last, she turned out of the main street, and he followed, still never getting a glimpse of her face, until she had struck out of the town and across the fields, in the direction of a group of cottages, where, so Lord Robert thought, he must surely lose sight of her.

On she went, over the grass and by the hedges, he keeping her always in sight. She passed all the cottages until she came to the very last, where, standing on the little stone step outside, she took a key from her pocket, and unlocked the door. Then, throwing it open, she turned, tilted back her sun-bonnet a little, saw Lord Robert, and beckoned him to come up.

Who was she? Lord Robert stared with all his eyes, feeling strangely sick, strangely daunted. Who was this woman of the queenly figure, in the old print dress, who invited him to follow her into this crazy little dwelling, where the open door led straight into a small living-room, and where the sunlight shone right through from the kitchen behind?

Before he could answer the question, she had disappeared, and he, scarcely seeing where he walked, stumbling, trembling, went in after her and followed her, through the little passage behind the front room, into the red-tiled kitchen.

X

THE little cottage kitchen was bright and cheerful, and the picture of neatness and order. Through the small window, with its latticed panes, the Summer sun shone, tempered by a drawn blind; and a gentle breeze, lifting the blind from time to time, showed a tiny garden, where old-fashioned cottage flowers grew in profusion, sweet-peas and hollyhocks, honeysuckle and dragon's mouth, waving to and fro on their long stalks, or swaying against the wall with a light, pleasant sound. And, beyond, there were fields and trees and hedges, a country landscape full of peace and rest.

Lord Robert had no eyes for all this. But, as he stood hesitating in the doorway, his hostess beckoned him in with a silent gesture, keeping her back toward him, and busying herself with the fire, which was low, and needed a few sticks, and a little raking out of cinder and ash.

He kept his eyes fixed on her, without daring to speak, not even yet certain who this strangely silent woman might be. On the one hand, she had the height and the figure, the grand movements and the strange grace, of Princess Paul. On the other, she was much more alert and brisk than that great lady. He tried in vain to see her hands, but she had them protected by what appeared to be a huge pair of gardening gloves. And, when he advanced to the hearth, so that he might see her face, he did indeed catch a glimpse of the profile, but it was not convincing, for the features, under the shade of the sun-bonnet which she had not thrown off, looked like, and yet unlike, those of the princess.

"Who are you?" he asked, suddenly. "Are you—Princess Paul Dimitrovsky?"

For answer, his hostess sat back on her heels at the hearth, put her hands on her hips, and laughed long and loud, with a joyous heartiness he had certainly never seen the princess exhibit. And, when she spoke, it was in good, Englishwoman's English, without a trace of foreign accent or intonation.

"I, a princess! Do I look like one?"

But Lord Robert was not satisfied yet. "You are either she, or her twin-sister," he said, steadily. "Which is it?"

With a graceful, rapid movement, the woman flung away the sun-bonnet, and he saw that her fair hair was of the same silver-gold color as that of the princess, but that it was fastened in a cottager's knot at the back of her head. Her face was sunburnt as to the lower part, yet the features were identical with those of the lady he loved.

"Guess again," said she, with an air of amused defiance.

"If you are not the princess, then," said Lord Robert, "where is she?"

With one long, laughing, mocking look, the woman pointed suddenly to a drawer in the kitchen table behind them; and Lord Robert, following this mute direction, opened the drawer, and saw within, thrown in with the utmost carelessness, a dazzling pile of gems, consisting of the necklace of fine pearls, the diamond-mounted breast-watch, the magnificent rings and the single-stone earrings, without which he had scarcely ever seen the princess.

For one moment, he looked at these things with a sort of stupefaction, and then, turning slowly, he came face to face with his hostess—in a new mood.

She had thrown off the coarse gloves, and was sitting, with her feet crossed before her, and her white hands clasping the sides of her chair, in a seat beside the hearth. And she met his look with a compound of dignity and defiance which kept him dumb. For

he had no longer any doubt that he was indeed in the presence of the princess; nor could he doubt, either, that he was in the presence, not of a foreigner, but of an Englishwoman.

"Yes," said she, "here is your answer, Lord Robert. The princess is here. But, perhaps, as I have no servants here, you will excuse me if I work while I talk."

Rising, she crossed the floor to a shelf, from which she took down a basket full of potatoes.

"Sit down," said she; "I shall soon have done this. I'm an old hand at this sort of thing." And she began to peel the vegetables.

But, instead of obeying her, Lord Robert came up to where she was standing, and said, looking down at her in amazement, which was by this time mingled with admiration and amusement: "You're the cleverest actress I ever saw. Till five minutes ago, I never guessed that you were an Englishwoman."

The princess rested her hand against the side of the bowl, and said, simply: "That was the hardest lesson I had to learn, but I learned it well. When the prince first met me, I couldn't speak English, so he decided that I must be a foreigner; and a foreigner I've been for five long years, and a great lady into the bargain. And, now, I'm heartily tired of both disguises." Taking up her knife again, she went on with her work, smiling to herself as she did so.

But the strangest part of it all was that, although she could take again to the old work, she could not take to it in the old way. If, as she declared, she had had to learn lessons, she had learned them well. For, under all her airs of bravado, she was wearing the air of a refined gentlewoman, not that of one who had, as she implied, risen from the ranks of the lowest.

"It seems to me though, princess," said Lord Robert, "that this present disguise is much more of a disguise than the others."

To his intense surprise, her face quivered, and the tears came into her eyes, while a flush overspread her face.

"That's the worst of it," she answered, with a sudden change to the most touching, pleading humility. "I've been yearning for a long time—for years, so it seems to me—to have done with the constraint and stiffness, with the state and the ceremony, that I have had to get used to all this time. And, now, I find that I am even more bored, more constrained, more out of my element, among the old ways, and among the old people than among the new."

"Among the old people!" Lord Robert echoed the words, with something like a cry. The scales were falling from his eyes. "I see! I see! Those were your old friends, the people at Greenwich. And—and——"

"And I tried to go back to them, and to live as I had lived before, and to see the old things with the old eyes," said the princess, down whose fair cheeks the tears were now running, "but the attempt was a failure. I had learned my lessons too well; I had caught the trick of the new life, of the new manners. And what had been pleasure to me in the old days, was now insupportable, horrible. And the people whom I had lived among, they were insupportable, too."

"The Tebbits!" ejaculated Lord Robert, in a sort of dull amazement.

"Yes, the Tebbits. They were my first friends; and, now, I cannot endure them, except at a distance. And it's not my fault!" Again the tears began to flow from her eyes.

"Of—of course not," stammered Lord Robert. "But—it's all very strange, very incomprehensible, that you could ever have been related to such people."

"I was not related to them. I was an orphan; I know nothing about my parents. But the Tebbits, who were acrobats——"

"Acrobats!"

"Yes. Don't look shocked yet; there's something worse to come. They took me as an apprentice——"

"You! Impossible!"

"It is true. They took me as an apprentice, and it was when I was on the

stage of a small music-hall, in the provinces, that Prince Paul Dimitrovsky saw me, fell in love with me, and straightway arranged with the Tebbits to have me taken away and educated."

Lord Robert could scarcely believe his ears.

"But I can never forget," she went on, earnestly, "that it is to the care these people took of me that I owe everything. Mr. Tebbit, the father of the others, made the most rigid conditions, and insisted on keeping in touch with me, to ascertain what became of me. I don't know whether the prince always intended to marry me, but, when I had been two years in hand, under governesses and masters, he announced that he should do so. Then, and then only, Mr. Tebbit was satisfied to let me go out of his surveillance, and I feel that he was as true and good a friend and guardian to me as a father could have been."

"Yes, I see; I understand. But his daughter, that woman with the impossible yellow hair! And—and the son—" In spite of himself, Lord Robert suffered his tone to become positively acrimonious, at the thought of the young man in pipe and shirt-sleeves daring to talk of the princess as if she had been on his own level.

The princess laughed a little, and reddened in some confusion. "Poor Ted!" said she. "He is a good fellow; and, at one time, I thought him—well, something that I can't think him now."

"Surely, it isn't true, what he said—he boasted—that—that you ever——"

"Ever thought it possible I might marry him?" continued the princess, keeping her tone very level, though it was plain the subject was scarcely a pleasant one to her. "Oh, yes, that is true. In the old days, we all thought I should marry him some day. I was fifteen or sixteen, and I didn't know—how could I?—what prospects were before me. And, when I went away to school, I was quite sorry to say good-bye to him," she went on, blushing very prettily at the recollection. "But I got over it, and it was not until a few months ago, when I had one of my fits

of restlessness and longing to get away from the life I was bound to, that I thought much of him again. Then, I wrote to Ellen, his sister, and I got a letter back, saying that they wished they could see me again, in the old way, not in my grand house, but just as I used to be. And the thought struck my fancy, and I wrote back the very note you saw. Then, the difficulty was, how to get away. For I must tell you that, even during my husband's lifetime, I had had fits of restless longing, which alarmed him, and made him think my bohemian blood was getting the upper hand in me, and that I should run away."

"And is that why he surrounded you with that fearful body-guard?"

"Yes. And, more than that, he made provision in his will that they were to be handsomely pensioned off as soon as I should be married again, provided I should marry in my new rank and not in my old."

"Oh!" said Lord Robert.

It was the gentlest of exclamations, but it signified that he understood, in a moment, some things which had puzzled him. He knew now why the two elderly ladies had shown him such hearty encouragement, why they had been so glad to think the princess had accepted him as her future husband.

Princess Paul laughed, mischievously. "The dear old things grew more and more anxious as I grew more and more restless. And I knew that it was hopeless to attempt to get away from them, without a friend to help me. So, I took advantage of your kindness, in the most barefaced manner, played with you, tricked you, and, by your unconscious help, got away that afternoon to Greenwich, where I ran into the first fashionable emporium of that classic locality, and bought a terrible brown ulster and sailor hat, in which disguise I don't think the wicked, lynx eyes of Sir Gilbert Atheling himself would have recognized me. And then—and then came the worst." And the princess sighed and laughed a little.

"You had traveled too far on a

different road," said Lord Robert, "and you found you could not go back."

"Exactly. When I met the dear, good people I found that they were not the people I remembered. Ellen, poor Ellen, dyed her hair a dreadful yellow; in the old days, it had seemed to me golden. That was a typical discovery. Her brother smoked appalling tobacco; her father, the best man that ever lived, dropped his h's, and did fearful things with his knife. But you understand that I loved them all the same, and that I knew the change was in me, not in them. But, on the whole, I suppose I was not much more uncomfortable than they were, and I thought they would be glad to get rid of me, so I ran away, on the very night when you watched the house, as soon as you had disappeared."

"You were watching me, then?"

She laughed and blushed a little. "Yes," said she, without looking at him. "There, now, I have made confession, and you understand what I am, and why it was impossible for me to listen to you. I am the unhappiest wretch upon earth, for I have been torn out of my own surroundings, and transplanted to a world where I am not at my ease."

"Not at your ease!" echoed Lord Robert.

"I mean that I am not happy in it," said the princess, restlessly. "If I had been happy, should I have indulged in this mad freak, at the risk of my reputation?"

"But are you sure," said Lord Robert, in a low voice, "that your unhappiness is caused by your surroundings? Isn't it, perhaps, that there is just one thing lacking, one thing that you vainly hoped you would find in the old life, among the old people?"

"Perhaps," said the princess, quickly. "In any case, I have failed to find it. When I met poor Ted, I confess I was frozen with horror, which I did my best to hide. And, when he wrote to me, I left his letters unanswered, not from the pride which he thought he saw in my silence, but

because I didn't know how to answer without wounding him. Then came his unfortunate visit, brought upon me by you, and I could think of no better way out of my difficulty than by behaving in the cruel manner I did. I hated myself for it, but it seemed to me that in that bold course lay my only safety—and his. For his pretensions, though they were brought about by my own folly, had to be nipped, of course, and at once."

"You had wonderful courage," said Lord Robert. "You succeeded in deceiving me. But, then, you had been able to do that before."

She bit her lip at this reproach. "Well," she said, with an assumption of hardness and flippancy which did not, on this occasion, deceive him into thinking her wanting in heart, "I had to make the best of an unhappy business. And I must tell you that I sent him a message, by my maid, whom I could trust, to say that he should not suffer for what I had to do. And he understood, and I have reason to believe that he is satisfied with what I have done for him. To do them justice, the whole family is good, and as disinterested as ever it is possible to be. I am ashamed of my behavior to those people—though, indeed, it was not my fault, but my misfortune, that we could get on together no longer. I have lost my old friends, and I can't accommodate myself to the new. There, now, we will dismiss the matter, please. You had to know the story, because you are one of those people who must know everything. But, now, there is another person to be satisfied."

And, after putting her potatoes into a saucepan which she set on the fire in the most clever and adroit fashion, she snatched up her sun-bonnet, her gloves and her basket, and went to the door.

"I have to meet Sir Gilbert Atheling," she said, "and to bring him here to dine with me. He, too, is to hear the whole story."

"What!" stammered Lord Robert, amazed.

"Yes," said the princess, com-

posedly; "he knows too much not to know the whole."

"But he will never believe——"

"He must believe or disbelieve just what he chooses," interrupted she, haughtily, "as you must do."

Lord Robert started up, angrily. "I won't be bracketed with that fellow," said he. "And it's not fair, princess, that you should attempt to do it. You thought differently of me, once; and, however I may have offended you, you know me better than you pretend."

"Do I?" said she, still at the door, perhaps softening a little, but not willing to betray herself. "Well, however that may be, we will put an end to our acquaintance for the future. I have confessed myself to-day, and—and there's an end of it."

She lingered one moment, but Lord Robert only bowed without speaking. Perhaps, there passed a shade of disappointment over her face; but, if so, it soon disappeared. And, with a wave of her now gloved hand, she turned and went rapidly out of the cottage, in the direction of the little town.

It was some time before Lord Robert heard voices and footsteps outside the cottage; but, when he did, he ran through the tiny passage and the front room, and flung open the door.

Both the princess and Sir Gilbert Atheling, who was carrying her basket with great gallantry, uttered an exclamation of amazement. For Lord Robert was in his shirt-sleeves, with his arms bare, a tablecloth fastened around him, in the manner of a cook's apron, and a white-paper cap upon his head.

"Come in, come in," he cried, "the potatoes are done, and I'll have the chops grilled in ten minutes. Sir Gilbert, would you go into the garden at the back, and see if you can find me some mint for the peas?"

The princess turned quite white, but Sir Gilbert, entering at once into the fun of the somewhat perplexing situation, went through into the cottage garden, while Lord Robert,

in a careless manner, stood by the range, with his hands on his hips.

"Have you got any sauce?" he said to the princess, who was standing, silent and shaken, at the other end of the little kitchen.

"Yes. But—but you can't cook, can you?"

"Can't I? Do you suppose I carried a chef about with me in Africa? Sit down, my girl—or, see here, you and I are neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring, so we can make our own rules of conduct, can't we? I got rid of Atheling in order to ask you for a kiss. Will you give it me?"

He had known how it was all going to end; perhaps, she, too, had known, only not quite so clearly. At any rate, she laughed, faintly murmured something about the absurdity of it, and made a weak attempt to seize the gridiron, and to begin the cooking of the chops herself.

But she was easily vanquished. He came up to her, and caught her around the waist.

"For the sake of those two poor old ladies!" he whispered. "Come, my little princess, won't you give way?"

She held him off for the space of a half-minute. "Do you really forgive me?" she whispered, quickly. "Do you really think you can ever care, always, for such a wild thing, such a fantastic, ill-regulated, whimsical creature as I?"

"My darling, my darling, you're not fantastic, not whimsical. You only want to be held firmly with the clasp of a lover's hand," whispered Lord Robert, as he took the kiss he had asked for.

"May I come in?" said Sir Gilbert's voice, rather drily, from outside.

"Does he know?" whispered Lord Robert.

"Everything—but *this!*" laughed back the blushing princess.

"Then, he shall know *this*, too," said Lord Robert, as he threw open the kitchen-door, with his hand on the princess's shoulder.

"An odd fancy, eh? of the princess's, to announce our engagement to you like this, Sir Gilbert," said he, as the baronet came in, with a handful of weeds, out of which he hoped that somebody might be able to discover the required herb; "but there's no accounting for a lady's caprices, you know."

"I—I congratulate you—both," gasped the baronet, who was still rather cross at the trick which had been played upon him, though his sense of humor was tickled. "I only wonder, princess, why you have been so long in making up your mind."

The princess answered with quickened breathing. "I had made up my mind," said she, in a low voice, "long, long ago. But I thought—I was afraid—that, when he knew

everything, he would not care for me!"

"Silly child!" murmured Lord Robert. "What was there to learn, after all? The prince knew it, didn't he?"

"Ah! But that—was different," said the princess, softly.

She could not say it, but they both understood how she had accepted everything with docility from the hands of her old husband; but that she had trembled with modest fear before a young lover.

They laughed a little, and asked no more questions. And so it fell out that she was justified in her daring ruse, for, at her cottage at Marlow, she had not only gained a husband, but had silenced the baronet forever as to the secret of Princess Paul.



A WINTER CAMEO

THE snow man, in the garden bed,
A sun umbrella o'er his head
Holds—sweetly smiling, all the day—
That he may never melt away!

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



BEYOND ENDURANCE

THE slender woman faced the burly burglar's deadly revolver, without a tremor of terror, for, as is well known, the weakest are often the bravest.

"Tell me where the money is hid," he hissed, most truculently, "or I'll fire!"

"Never!" she answered, determinedly, and with a marked accent on the "r." "Kill me, if you will, but I will never reveal the hiding-place of my husband's hard-earned hoard! Villain, do your worst!"

"I will!" snarled the scoundrel, baffled for the moment, but not beaten. "Tell me, instantly, or I'll drop this big, woolly caterpillar down your neck!"

In three minutes more, he had bagged the boodle, and was splitting the midnight darkness in a northeasterly direction.



IT is endurable not to know; but not to be known, makes countless millions mourn.

ROSE WORDS

CLIMB to my window, Roses!
 Sing, for she robbed your vine!
 Sing if her heart encloses
 Aught that is mine, is mine!

Borrow the night-wind's ballad,
 Blow me a scented hope;
 For she paused where the moon lay pallid
 Under my gable slope!

And she moved and murmured over
 And gathered three of you,
 And she bore you down the clover,
 For I heard the gate go to.

But the rose she reached and twisted
 Into her wheaten hair—
 Will it win her unresisted,
 Will it win her, woven there?

Oh, the winds were likelier wedded
 To the oak they whistle through,
 Or the blossom, breezy headed,
 To its shaken drop of dew.

Will it whisper what I spoke it
 Ere I dropped it in her reach—
 Will it say I blessed and broke it
 Just to be a sweeter speech?

Oh, Roses, Roses, flutter
 To my window, rustle low;
 Can a word I could not utter
 By a rose be spoken so?

HARRISON S. MORRIS.



A DEFINITION

LITTLE GERALD (*who has an inquiring mind*)—Pa, what is a philanthropist?

MR. WINSLOW—A philanthropist, my son, is a man who is willing to give away almost any amount of money, in order to get his name in the newspapers.

THE SHADOW OF A DREAM

By Justus Miles Forman

"Lord, Thou hast made this world below
the shadow of a dream."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

WHEN I come walking down
the Road that morning, I was
that peaceful and happy
you'd never understand if I was to try
to tell you—that is, you'd never under-
stand unless you feels the way I do
about the Road. Gumdrop has a
little piece which he recites about it—
the Road. He says as he didn't make
up the piece himself, but I expect he
did, Gumdrop being very clever and
once a gentleman. The piece goes
this way—

"For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!"

It's just like that, the Road. It
gets into your blood most surprising.
There isn't nothing monotonous, you
see.

A man never knows just what he
may be a-going to find around the next
bend; there's such various and sundry
things might happen to him—and
generally does. Why, damn if I
don't believe I'd just croak, if I had
to stay right in one place for days and
months and years, the way some peo-
ple does, like a—tree.

Well, as I was saying, I was very
peaceful and happy as I come loafing
down the Road that morning. A
pleasant old dame at a farm-house had
give me some cold beefsteak and some
hot corn-bread and half an apple
pie, which I had et it all, so I was
most comfortable inside. And the
sun wasn't hot, just warm and cheer-
ful like, as it is of a Summer morning,

and there was wild flowers alongside
the Road, very sweet, and bees a-flying
about them, busy as you like, and
everything was so fresh and cool and
full of good smells, that I almost wants
to sing as I shuffles along in the dust.

I'd been pretending that I had a
pile of money—a hundred dollars.
Of course, that was a foolish sum, but
while you're pretending you might
as well make it a lot, and have done.
And I was deciding just what I'd do
with it all, a dollar here, and two bits
there, and a fiver somewheres else,
which is a very pleasant way of passing
your time.

Of course, I would give half of it
to Gumdrop, because we're pardners.
Did I say why his name is Gumdrop?
It is because he is very fond of them,
and, when he has a bit of money, he
spends it most reckless for little paper
bags of them, and eats them on the
Road. They're red and white and
black. The red ones is very delicious
to suck, but too sweet. I like the
black ones, myself; they have licorice
in them.

Gumdrop is the finest pal that a
man ever had. He was once a gentle-
man, as I says some time back, and I
don't know exactly why he took to the
Road. I expect he got into trouble.

Sometimes, they does. Nor I don't
know, neither, why he took up with me
when he might have took up with
some one much higher up in the
world, for he knows most of the first-
class guns in the East, though he is
only a porch-climber, himself. He
talks most bitter, at times, about all
those years he wasted, being a gentle-
man. You see, it set him back con-

siderable, gave him a late start, as you might say. Why, if he'd been able to start in as a boy, he'd be cracking cribs along with some of the best men in the country to-day!

However, though I expect it is very nasty of me to say it, I'm glad he isn't, because then he would not be my pardner, me being something awful as a grafter, not even fit for mollbuzzing, not even a regular hobo in good standing. You see, a long time back—I forget how long—I gets a knock on the head, and it makes me very queer, so that the other men doesn't care for me strong, at all. They think I'm not quite right.

It seems there was a little gang of hoboos living, for a time, in an empty shack near some empty stone quarries, and one of them finds me, bright and early of a morning, lying at the bottom of the quarry, not dressed in nothing at all but a pair of old overalls, and with a big, red crack in my head. He sees that I'm alive, this hobo, and, being very kind-hearted, carries me to the shack, and they takes care of me there for a month or so, till I'm on my pins again. How I gets into that quarry with the overalls and the crack in my head, I has no idea, having forgotten complete. I don't even know my name nor nothing about who I used to be, so they calls me Joe, after a pal of theirs that is dead.

They tries very hard to teach me the game, but, Lord! I'm not cut out for a grafter, and they gives it up, disgusted. All I appears to be good for is to sit about, of evenings, and tell them tales that I makes up out of my head as I goes along. I pretends that I'm a gentleman living in a fine, great house, and I tells them about everything in the house, and what I wears, and what I eats, and the wine I drinks—making it up as I goes along, just as easy! And I tells them about the valet that takes care of my clothes, and wakes me up of a morning, and how I goes into a little, white room, and gets into a long, white thing, like a coffin, full of water, and

washes myself every blessed day! And I tells them how the valet gives me a new clean shirt every morning—you'd ought to see them laugh at that!—and helps me on with my things; and how I brushes my hair with two little brushes—I don't know why I says two, but that is the way it comes into my head—and, then, how I goes down the stairs to a fine, big, light room with flowers in it and a white table—just like the little tables you sees at the railway eating-parlors—and eats a most beautiful breakfast.

I tells them about the horses I owns, and the wonderful carriages, and the men in tight breeches that takes care of them; and about the dogs, and even what the dogs' names is. And I imitates the way the hired men speaks to me, and how I gives 'em orders, very short and sharp, till the hoboos just yells with laughter. They says I'm the finest liar they knows, and that they wouldn't have missed lugging me out of that quarry for ten dollars, or even twenty.

But, after a bit, they gets a little restless, and begins shaking their heads in corners together, and talking about me so that I can't hear. This makes me very blue, because I likes them a great deal, knowing how much they all has done for me, and I studies to tell them better tales. But, after a few days, one of them tells me that the stories is just the trouble. I knows too damn much about all these things, they says. It ain't in reason that a hobo should know such a lot about things a hobo doesn't never see.

"Why, hell," says I; "it's nothing but tales. I makes them up." But that won't do at all. They won't believe me. Nor they won't believe that I can't remember nothing about who I was, nor where I comes from before they finds me in that quarry.

They has other things against me, too. I cleans my teeth regular with an old toothbrush I found by an ash-can, one day, and I washes frequent in the river, and I doesn't care for some of the low-down tales they tells at times. Of course, I'm sorry about it all.

People is made different. Some likes to feel clean and others doesn't, but I can't make them see that, and they says I'm no proper hobo at all, and they're suspicious of me.

Now, a few months before, one of them, who can read, happens on a print that has some wonderful true tales about hoboes and all sorts of grafters in it. It was wrote by some man as wasn't properly a grafter at all, but dressed up like one, and lived about with them for a long time. So, when I appears to know such a lot about things, they gets afraid that I'm one of these fellows, or that I'm some sort of plain-clothes man spying on them, and they turns ugly.

Sometimes, they says, too, I talks different—sometimes, when I've been telling tales, and hasn't got them quite out of my head yet, and one day something happens that makes them a great deal worse.

A man comes along the Road with a dancing bear. He isn't a proper dago, but a Frenchy, and he's trying to ask the way to the next town; but he can't talk anything but his own lingo. Well, then, floor me, if I doesn't start in talking his lingo, too—as easy as you like! I don't know why. It just comes into my head. And, of course, that makes the gang uglier and more suspicious than ever.

I expect they'd have done for me, most probable, if Gumdrop hadn't up and took my part. He tells them that they're—he tells them what they are, and blow me, if he doesn't insist on lighting out on the Road along with me. I begs him not to do it, just on my account, me being no good whatever in his line of graft—or any other. But Gumdrop allows that he is plumb sick of the gang, anyhow, and that he wants a pardner as can keep him merry with tales and the like, of an evening.

So, me and Gumdrop, we takes the Road, and I want to tell you that a man never had a better pal than Gumdrop. He does a job of porch-climbing now and then, but, mostly, we tramps and is very happy. In the

Winter, we works to the south, and, in the Spring, we comes back here. And, bad weather or fair, we loves it, me and Gumdrop, it being so various and sundry. Lord, if I had to stay days and months and years right in one place, as some people does—well, I don't have to; so I moves along.

This particular morning, as I started in to tell about, when I comes trudging down the Road so peaceful and happy, Gumdrop is away for a week on a little job, but I knows where to find him when the week is up, so I doesn't worry any or get lonesome—except of an evening, sometimes. I just moves along, wondering what will turn up, and not caring particular what it is, so long as it's different.

But, as I walks on, sniffing comfortable at the good smells, and watching the little bees and things, I begins to feel a bit queer and most curious. It comes over me that there is something about that Road I remembers, like as if I might have seen it before, or, maybe, tramped it once, a long time ago—only queerer than that still. I feels about that Road just as I feels sometimes about the tales I makes up out of my head, very odd and uncomfortable.

"Now," says I to myself, "if it wasn't all—nonsense and plumb foolish, I'd say that just around that bend ahead they was an apple-tree leaning out over the Road, twisted most curious, and, beyond the apple-tree, a little white house as nobody has lived in for a long time, with a stone wall and a well-sweep."

And, blow me, if they isn't there, when I turns the bend in the Road, all of them, the apple-tree, twisted curious, and the little white house and the well. I goes very queer inside, sudden like, the way you goes, sometimes, when you hasn't been fed proper for quite a while.

But I laughs and pretends to myself that it isn't nothing, and says, very loud and brave, that it's just one of them queer dreams I has now and then; but I keeps a proper watch, just the same, along that Road, and there's

more than one thing, as I goes on, to make me gulp.

There is a high stone wall, at one side of the Road, that commences just beyond the little white house, and keeps on most amazing far, but I trots ahead under the wall, going a little faster, I don't know why. And, presently, when I comes to a rise, I sees water beyond, and knows that it's Long Island Sound. And I sees the tops of trees over across the wall, and the chimneys of a fine, big house. But, still, I trots ahead, I don't know why—like I knows where I was going, though, of course, that is foolish.

Then, I comes to a gate in the wall, a great big, very proper gate, with high posts, and a driveway winding in between a lot of fir-trees toward the fine house. And I cuts in through the gate, me still being, as you might say, in a queer sort of dream, and a bit daffy-like.

I doesn't follow the driveway, but I goes over across a big lawn of the greenest grass you ever see, greener than paint, and I comes to a flower-garden where there is all the kinds of flowers that grows, very sweet and handsome, and I sees a lady, standing there among the roses, a-squeezing stuff on them with a little rubber ball. I doesn't see her face, at first, but she is dressed just like the wax ladies in the shop-windows, all over white lace and such, and she is the very most beautiful sight I ever claps eyes upon.

I doesn't feel at all natural yet, but scandalous shaky and odd and dreamy; still, I thinks, pulling myself together for a minute, that here's a chance for two bits, or maybe even a whole dollar, the lady looking so amiable and kind. I wishes Gumdrop was along, because he's so much better than me at getting dough out of people. I'm only fit to look humble and hungry and meek, and to tell a hard-luck story, but, Lord! Gumdrop he can scare 'em into forking out if the hard-luck story is no go. I can't never scare women—I haven't got the heart. They're so soft and weak and beautiful, all of

them, that it goes against me. I tries to do it, sometimes, but I always end up by begging their pardons, which is so foolish!

"Please, ma'am," says I to the beautiful lady among the roses, "please, could you spare a poor dev—a poor man as can't find work, a few cents to buy a meal? I haven't had nothing to eat in two days," I says, sniveling a bit.

The lady turns around slow, and looks me over, and, when she sees my face, she catches her breath like, and goes very white, and she drops the little rubber ball to the ground, and presses her hands to her throat, and her eyes grows to about twice their size, most curious.

But, me, I goes queer inside again, quite sudden, and I stands and shakes like a scared horse. I don't know why. It is all very extraordinary.

Then, after a long time, she says, still staring at me:

"Berkeley! Berkeley!" And her voice shakes like me, most pitiful.

Of course, my name is Joe, but I never thinks of that. I looks at her, trembling all the time, and I whispers: "Alice, Alice, Alice!"—I don't know why. I expect it come into my head that her name ought to be Alice, just like the tales comes into my head, easy as can be.

And, at that, she just crumples all up and pitches over forward against me, nearly knocking me off my pins, I was that weak. And she takes hold of my shoulders with both her hands, and drops her face right on to my breast, and falls to sobbing, something awful.

Of course, I don't know what to do, and I near goes dotty right then and there, with the excitement and all. I wants to drop her and run, but I knows that won't do, and, besides, I'm not more than half able, being that shaky.

So, I just pats her gentle on the back, and speaks soothing to her.

"There, there!" I says, a-patting her. "Good dog!" I says, being very flustered. "Good doggie! pretty poll!"

And, then, I sees what idiot rot I'm talking, and I shuts up.

But the beautiful lady hangs to me for a month, more or less, till I think she is never going to let go. And, after a very long time, she looks up and catches my eye, and, curse it! I goes queer inside, all over again, because there is something about her that I can't explain. I feel as if I must have knew her a long time ago, though, of course, that is foolish, me being not even a hobo in good standing, and her a sort of angel like.

But she says again, "Oh, Berkeley, Berkeley!" with her voice going up and down, uncertain. "You've come back to me," she says, "after all this time! Three years," says she, whispering, "three lifetimes, three eternities!" And her voice breaks all up to bits, so that she just lies against me, weeping and sobbing pitiful.

Of course, I sees that she has made a mistake, and takes me for somebody else, but that doesn't help me out much, being, as I said before, very queer and about three-quarters in a dream. Still, I pulls together the best I can, and I says:

"Excuse me, ma'am," I says. "You're taking me for somebody else, ma'am. I'm sorry, I sure am sorry, but it isn't me you wants. My name is Joe, ma'am," I says, "Gentleman Joe. I'm sorry I scared you and—and upset you, like. I just comes in to ask for a few cents to get a meal with. I haven't had nothing to eat for two days. If you'll just let go, ma'am," I says, desperate, "I'll be moving on. Never mind the money."

But, at that, she brings her head up with a jerk, and stares me in the eyes again, and I feels her tremble worse than ever. She never takes her eyes off mine.

"He—doesn't know!" she whispers to herself. "Merciful heavens!" she says, "he doesn't know." And she drags herself closer to me, shaking and staring.

"Oh, Berkeley, Berkeley!" she says, "don't you know me? Don't you know me, at all, Berkeley? Why, you

—you called me by name, at first! You called me, 'Alice.' Try to think, dear!" says she, pleading like.

"Dear," to me! my God! me, a hobo!

"Try to remember!" says she. "Oh, Berkeley, have you forgotten? Ah, you've been ill. You've had a fever or something. We must nurse you back to health. Oh, dearest, dearest, how terrible!" And she falls to weeping again, me not knowing any more than before what to do. I think for a minute of how much I'd give to have Gumdrop there. Gumdrop would have knew what to do, being very clever. Of course, I'm flustered something awful, what with that beautiful lady weeping all over me, and with longing to get back to the good yellow Road and the sunshine and the little bees, where it is all so comfortable and happy. But, the worst of all is the queer feeling I has inside me, all sorts of things a-rushing through my head the way they does in dreams now and then. And I wonders if, maybe, this isn't a dream, all of it—I have very real ones, often—and, at last, I decides that that is what it is—a queer dream. And, then, I don't feel so bad, because, I says, I'll wake up by-and-bye, and everything will be natural again.

After a bit, the beautiful lady stops weeping, and stands up and takes me by the arm.

"Come, dear!" she says; and I wishes she'd quit calling me "dear,"—me, a hobo!

"Come up to the house," she says. "You're home at last, thank God! We must get you into clean clothes, and you must have breakfast, and rest a little. Then, we can—we can talk it all over. You'll remember, bit by bit, dearest," says she. "You've been very ill and wretched, and it has made you—it has affected you. Everything will return to you, presently. Come!"

I hangs back at first, being scared, and longing terrible to get away from it all, and on the Road again; but I thinks of the clothes, and I tries to imagine what Gumdrop would do.

"Would Gumdrops shy out of a chance like this?" says I to myself. "Not in a thousand years! He'd jump at it," says I. "He'd play it for all there was in sight," I says. And I let the beautiful lady steer me up through the gardens, and across a most tremendous lawn, miles and miles wide, to something that looked like a palace or a court-house, up on the hill.

Some fine, big dogs with thin waists comes jumping and playing out to meet us.

They was exactly like the dogs I makes up in the tales I used to tell to the gang. And there is one of them that I takes to be the father of the others, because he trots along behind them, very sober and dignified. He cocks his ears a bit when he sees me, and looks at me suspicious, growling down in his stomach, and he sniffs about my legs till I gets quite nervous; but, all of a sudden, he gives a yelp, and begins hopping and leaping about me and all over me, as if I was his long-lost brother. He nearly turns himself inside out, being so happy and joyful, and the beautiful lady cries out and squeezes my arm.

"He knows you!" says she. "Boris knows you! Don't you remember him, Berkeley? He used to be with you all the time."

It seems to me as if I had heard that name somewheres, "Boris," but I never lets on. I only shakes my head. What in—what would a hobo like me be doing with such a dog?

"No, ma'am!" I says. "You're both mistaken. I never have knew either of you before."

We goes up on a big, wide porch, with tables and wonderful, great wicker-chairs strewed about on it, and small carpets on the floor; and the beautiful lady calls in at a door:

"Peters, Peters!" And a fine-looking gentleman, with close side-whiskers and black clothes—the kind that hasn't any waistcoat to speak of—comes out.

"Here's where I gets kicked into the Road," says I to myself, and I backs over toward the porch steps. But the

gentleman only stands near the beautiful lady, with his hands together in front of him, and his head cocked on one side, like a bird.

"Peters," says she, with her voice still going up and down some, "Peters, who is—that?" She waves a hand toward me, and the gentleman looks at me very disdainful for a minute, and I edges closer to the steps. But, all at once, his eyes gets very round and sticks out, and his face gets red.

"My God!" says he, and he begins to shake, too. "It's Mr. Pennington!" And the lady gives a little cry.

But I backs away again. "Please, sir!" I says, touching my cap to him, "it's all a mistake. That isn't my name at all. I only stops to ask for a few cents to buy a meal with," I says. "I haven't had nothing to eat for two days. But, if you don't mind, sir, I'll just be getting on. It's all a mistake. I'm very sorry I scared the lady. I didn't mean to."

"Oh, Berkeley, Berkeley!" cries the beautiful lady, and catches me by the arm again.

"He has been ill," she says, turning to the gentleman, "and he—he has forgotten. We will take him up to his room, Peters," she says, very gentle; and the gentleman says:

"Very good, mem. This way, Mr. Pennington, sir."

Why, I almost drops when he says, "sir." Nobody else ever talked to me that way in all my life; but I expect he does it to humor the lady.

So, they takes me by the arms, one on each side, as if I was sick and feeble, and, after I hangs back for one last minute, wanting very bad to jerk away and run, I lets them lead me into the house, and up some terrible slippery stairs that you could see your face in, though they was wood, and into a big, dim room with a white bed in it.

It gives me a turn, at first, the room does, because it is just like the one I makes up out of my head to tell the gang about, but I remembers

that this is all just a very particular dream, and feels better.

They sets me down on a big couch that sinks under me a foot or two, wonderful soft, and the beautiful lady puts her hand against my cheek and pats it, though I tries to shrink away, not being fit for her to touch.

"Peters will lay out some clothes, dearest," says she. "All your old things are here. Nothing is changed, at all." And she goes out of the room, which is certainly some relief.

But the gentleman in the fine clothes, he is bustling about, opening doors, and bringing out all sorts of coats and shirts and things, and laying them across the bed. And he goes into a room next door, and I hears water running, and, just like a flash, I remembers what I used to tell the hoboos about the little white room with the white coffin, full of water, and the man that fixed it. It was most odd.

When the gentleman comes back into the room where I sits, I steps up to him, being very anxious to know just what it all means, and I touches my cap again, and says:

"Please, sir, would you mind telling me who you ail thinks I am—owing to this very odd mistake—and, in particular, who the beautiful lady is, as just left me?"

And the gentleman says, looking pained and sorrowful and kind:

"You're Mr. Pennington, sir," he says, "and this is your house, sir," says he. "You've been away for three years, and we thought you was dead. You have been ill, sir," he says, "and that is why you don't remember. I'm Peters, sir, as has been your valet for ten years. Shall we get your clothes off now, sir, so that you can have your bath?"

I stands staring at him. Why, I could have laughed out loud! This my house! And him my valet! Lord! I expect I did laugh a little; it was so plumb foolish, even for a dream.

"And the beautiful lady?" says I.

"Why, God bless me, sir!" says he,

"that is Mrs. Pennington, sir, your wife."

Well, I couldn't laugh any more. I just shakes my head, and sighs. It was beyond me. Dreams, when they is rum, is so very rum! The gentleman might have said as he was my father, and I'd never have batted an eye.

So, I takes off my rags, and goes into the little white room—there is so many looking-glasses about that I fair blushes for shame.

It is the same room I used to tell the gang about, I sees that; but, as I steps into the coffin, Mr. Peters says from the door, "Water all right, sir?" And I answers back, absent like, "Yes, yes; but where's that brown soap? Bring the brown soap." Then, I wonders what made me say that, and what brown soap I was a-talking about. And I sees Mr. Peters's eyes sticking out like a frog's.

"That's—that's better, sir," he whispers, trying very hard to smile. "You're a-commencing to remember, sir," he says, and brings me some queer-looking, brown soap.

Well, I dresses up in some wonderful clothes that Mr. Peters gives me, though I tells him again that it is all a foolish mistake, and that I hasn't any right to them clothes, and I goes down-stairs, holding very tight to the stair-rail, and walking careful like a cat, and I finds the beautiful lady a-waiting for me. I begins to tell her all over again about the whole thing being wrong, but I can see as she isn't listening proper at all.

She wants to feed me, but I tells her the truth about the pleasant old dame at the farm-house, as gave me cold beefsteak and corn-bread and apple pie, and she laughs a little, half as if it sort of hurts her. And she asks me, would I like to talk a bit about where I had been, and what I had been doing, for the last two or three years. So, I tells her about the gang, and about how they soured on me, and about the tales I used to make up for them—she seems to be very keen on them tales—and I tells her about

Gumdrop, and how good he had been to me. She thinks his name is very funny, especial when I tells her how he come by it.

"But this—this friend, Gumdrop," says she. "You say he does a 'job' occasionally," she says. "You mean he is not always a—a tramp; that he takes employment when he can find it?"

"Yes, ma'am," says I. "He is a porch-climber."

"A—what?" she asks, puzzled like.

"A porch-climber, ma'am," says I. "You climbs up on the roof of a porch, and gets in at the windows."

But she moves away from me a bit, and gives a little cry.

"A *thief!*" says she. "A common *thief!*"

So, then, I tells her that it is not Gumdrop's fault; that he might be cracking cribs now if he had started in early enough. Of course, I admits to her, porch-climbing is not first-class work, but Gumdrop will be digging tunnels under banks before many years, him being very clever and knowing so many first-rate guns.

"And—you, Berkeley?" says the beautiful lady, in a whisper. "Have you done this—this thieving, too?"

And I has to hang my head for shame, though it hurts me cruel. "No, ma'am," says I, very humble, "no, ma'am, I'll never be the man Gumdrop is. I'll never make a grafter, not even the lowest kind. They all says so. I'm too awkward." I was afraid she'd despise me, but she seems actually glad, being kind-hearted by nature, I expect.

So, we sits talking, for a long time. She wants me to drop calling her, "ma'am," and to call her, "Alice," but I near faints away at that.

"Oh, no, ma'am," says I. "Begging your pardon, ma'am, I couldn't never come to that, me being nothing but a hobo, and not fit to be looked at by you. I couldn't do it, ma'am. Why, hell, no, I couldn't think of it!"

So, she doesn't say nothing more

about that, but asks me if I don't get lonesome on the Road with nobody but Gumdrop for company, and she wants to know if I don't mind being shut away from women altogether, as I am.

I tries to make her see that there isn't nothing lonesome about the Road, it being so various and sundry. And I tries to tell her what a fine pal Gumdrop is, and what a gun he might be if only he'd work at it harder; but, Lord, I can see as she doesn't understand. What would such as her know about a pair of hoboos, anyhow? I sees that it is plumb foolish to talk, and so I shuts up, presently. I doesn't tell her nothing about the little girl up in Connecticut, neither. I doesn't even tell Gumdrop about that. You see, she lives on a farm, near Danbury. The farm people they took her when she was a kid from an orphan asylum, and she helps in the kitchen. She's a very pretty little girl with yellow hair and blue eyes, and I likes to watch her fly about the poultry-yard with her hair coming down over her face. It's always a-coming down. I never sees her but twice, but I thinks about her a great deal, of an evening, and, if ever I gets sick of the Road, and settles down, I'd like to have that girl with the yellow hair to settle down with me, and keep me straight. I'm certain, somehow, as we'd be very happy and contented. There's times when I wants to do it right away, and gets very sentimental about her; but I expect the Road would be hard to quit, it being so various and sundry. It gets into your blood, the Road does.

I expect we sat there a-talking, me and the beautiful lady, for a couple of hours, and then she says, wouldn't I like to go up to my room and sleep, because I must be very weary. Of course, I goes, like a shot. I wasn't weary since I hasn't done nothing but sit around all the morning, and I doesn't want any sleep, but I wants to get off somewheres alone and study about what is to be done.

So, I goes up to my room—*my* room,

Lord!—and sits there, looking about at the fine things the room was full of, the little carpets on the floor that slides out from under your feet when you steps on them, and tries to throw you down, and the silver things all lying about loose for any one to slip in his pocket, and the books and pictures and all. And the more I looks and thinks, the odder it seems, and the less I am able to make it out.

I expect I must have went to sleep, after all, because, when I knows anything next, it is near seven by the clock on the table near me, and Mr. Peters is just coming into the room with a beautiful dinner spread out on the top of a wash-boiler.

I blinks at him very stupid, for I've been having a most extraordinary dream, thinking I was a gentleman, and that I owned this house and all that sort of foolishness, just as Mr. Peters and the beautiful lady had been trying to make out to me. Mr. Peters says that Mrs. Pennington thinks maybe I would rather have my meal up-stairs alone, but she'd be pleased if I would come down after I was through.

I eats a little, not very hearty, in spite of the wonderful fine things as Mr. Peters has brought on the wash-boiler top, because I'm feeling queer and upset again, like I was in the morning—owing to the dream, I expect. Then, after a while, I goes down-stairs again, holding tight to the stair-rail, and I finds the beautiful lady talking to another man in a corner.

She gets up, when she sees me, and the man gets up, too.

"Berkeley, dear," she says, and I turns red to hear her talk that way before a stranger; "Berkeley, dear," she says, "this is Dr. Morgan, who is an old friend of ours—of mine. He has come to welcome you back to your home, Berkeley, and to—to help you remember."

The gentleman she calls Dr. Morgan is a big man, with the sharpest, steadiest eyes I ever has seen. He makes for me, putting out his hand,

but I dodges him, and backs up against the wall, in a corner, breathing short, for I thinks he is a plain-clothes man come after me.

"What do you want me for?" says I, holding up one arm if he should go to hit me. "I haven't done nothing," I says. "Let me alone!" But he gives a pleasant little laugh, and I sees that he doesn't mean no harm.

"Come, old chap!" says he; "shall we go out on the porch for a cigar? Mrs. Pennington will excuse us for an hour, I'm sure."

I'm not strong for going at all, but he sort of pushes me along, and we sits down on the big porch, and smokes—it is the first time I ever smokes a whole new cigar—and the gentleman, he talks about all sorts of things, very easy and comfortable, but he keeps his sharp eyes on me, I sees that plain enough, and, after a while, he begins to ask me questions about myself, and about the tales I used to tell the hoboos, and how they happens to come into my head, and where the quarry was as the gang found me in. I answers his questions the best I knows how, but he asks too many, till I begins to get a bit sulky, and shuts up. That doesn't worry him none, though; he just nods and talks about other things some more.

And, after an hour or so, he gets up and says I mustn't let him keep me from bed, and that he'll excuse me if I wants to go back to my room.

I goes, to get away from him, not that I wants to sleep—they seems to think I ought to sleep all the time—but, near the stairs, I meets the beautiful lady once more. She puts her hands up on my shoulders, and raises her face to look into my eyes.

"Good night, Berkeley, dear," says she, very gentle and soft. "Oh, thank God, you've come back to me, at last," she says. And I goes all queer inside again, and begins to shake, the way I done in the morning. She has something about her that smells like thousands of violets, and it gets into my head most curious, and makes me weak and odd. I want to

touch her hair with my hand, but, of course, I know that won't do, so I looks away, and a lot of strange, foolish things goes tearing through my head in bits, and I keeps on shaking, quite absurd.

"Berkeley, dear!" she says again, in a little, soft voice, and I grips my hands, and scowls out over the top of her head, a-thinking as I can't stand it very much longer, I feels so very queer. I never feels that way before. I expect it was the rich things Mr. Peters gives me for my dinner, me not being used to such.

Then, after a minute more, she takes her hands off my shoulders, and moves away, with a little sigh.

"Good night, Berkeley," she says, as if she was tired. "Sleep sound, dear. Peters will make you comfortable." And I goes up the stairs double-quick, never looking back. There is just a little dim light in my room, and Mr. Peters isn't in sight, not expecting me so soon, I judge. I drops down on one of the little carpets by an open window, not being used to chairs, and I sits there a long time, breathing hard, and my head is going round and round with the strange, foolish things that tears into it and out again, before I can find out proper just what they are.

I'm still very weak and wobbly, and I wants to weep, like a woman—I don't know why. Something inside me is a-pounding against my chest, and that worries me some, when I finds time to think of it.

At any rate, it isn't no dream, the whole thing, as I says in the morning. Dreams doesn't last so long. It's just a very big and very foolish mistake, and, when they finds out about it, I'm going to get kicked out into the Road, hard. But, then, I falls to thinking about the little white house and the apple-tree, and about the way I called the beautiful lady "Alice," and about the queer little minutes I has when I seems to have saw this house before, somewhere. And all that mixes me up so, and starts my head to going round so dizzy like, that I'm

half dotty again, and I just sits, cursing soft to myself, and breathing hard, and my forehead is all wet.

Lord, how I wants to get away out on the Road again! I smells the fir-trees through the open window, and I thinks how fine and comfortable and happy it would be to wake with the sun a-shining into my eyes, and the ants crawling over me. I thinks of the things that might turn up just around the next bend of the Road—and generally does, and I'm sick to get out of this nightmare business, and back where I belongs.

There's people walking on the porch below my window, two people, a man and a woman. I can tell because my ears is always extraordinary sharp, like a dog's. They're a-talking, and, when they come under the window, I can hear what they says. It's the beautiful lady and the gentleman as she calls Dr. Morgan. She is asking questions of him about something, and, by-and-bye, they halts just below me, while the gentleman explains to her.

"My hypothermia is," says he, "that the wound on the head has left a slight pressure of the bone upon the brain. Hence," he says, "the absolute, or nearly absolute, destruction of the memory. This pressure removed, the memory returns. There have been many such cases."

Then, the beautiful lady asks him how it could be done.

"Trepanning, madame," says he. "We cut out a section of the skull near the probable seat of trouble, and investigate."

She gives a little cry at that, and they commences to walk up and down again, so as I can't hear nothing more; but I crouches beside the window, cold clear through, and wipes the sweat off my forehead.

"Cut out a section of the skull!" he says, the damned murderer! So, that's what they're a-going to do to me! That's what they've been a-kind-wording me and a-feeding me and talking silly nonsense to me, for! They wants to cut me up! Oh, yes; I've

heard of them places before! Gumdrop tells me about them. They traps you into them, and they ties you down on a cursed little table, and cuts you into ribbons, just for fun. And, if you faints away with pain, they brings you to again, the doctors does, so as they can cut you some more. It isn't no fun for them if you doesn't howl and squirm.

I thinks of the high stone wall and the big grounds, and the Sound down at the other side, and I sees what a trap they has got me in.

Then, I jumps up and makes for the door, but Mr. Peters appears very sudden, and I drops back again.

"I'll just fix the bed, and lay out your night things, Mr. Pennington, sir," says he, and I sits in the corner watching him, while he bustles about. Then, he asks if there is anything else he can do, and I says no, and he goes out, shutting the door soft behind him. But I makes two jumps, and lays my ear against the keyhole, and hears a creak outside, like as if some one was a-sitting down in a chair. So, I knows that Peters is on guard, and that I can't get out that way.

I locks the door, however, and, after a while, I turns out my light, Peters having showed me how to do it, and I crouches down by the open window to wait.

I expect it isn't more than a couple of hours, or maybe three, that I waits, but it seems a great many years.

At last, when everything is quite still, I leans out of the window, and feels about, and, thank the Lord! I finds a water-pipe running down. It doesn't take me thirty seconds before I'm on the ground, and I makes no noise, neither. Gumdrop would have been proud of me. There is a little stretch of moonlight to cross before I makes the shade of the trees, but I

bolts it like a rabbit. I has one fright as nearly does for me. That old father dog with the slim waist comes cantering out, and makes for me, but I stands still and calls to him, low like, and he never barks at all, just jumps about me, wagging his tail.

Well, we made very good time down to the wall, me and that old father dog, and I almost drops when I finds the iron gates shut fast. They is straight, round bars, so I can't climb them, but I runs along under the wall, cursing bitter, and looking for a tree, which I finds it directly, a very proper one with strong branches, and I goes up it, and over that wall like a hunted cat, leaving the old dog very disgusted and complaining behind.

I travels all that night, and lays up the next day, and now I hopes I have got where they won't think of looking for me. To-morrow, I expects to meet Gumdrop, and then everything will be happy and peaceful again, because Gumdrop is certainly the finest pal a man ever had, and the Road is always a-beckoning.

I wish I could forget about the beautiful lady, though. I keeps a-seeing her eyes, and hearing her voice, which is foolish. And I has very, very queer dreams. I tries to think that she hadn't nothing to do with trapping me, and wanting to carve me up, her being so kind and all. I wish I could forget her eyes.

This morning, they was a plain-clothes man—you can always tell them—looks at me very sharp as I goes through a village. It scared me. What if they should be a-trying to get me back to that place? Lord!

Anyhow, to-morrow, I meets up with Gumdrop, and we takes the Road together, good old Gumdrop and me. There's nothing like the Road—it being so various and sundry.



YOUNG WOMAN—Allow me, Mr. Soak, to offer you a brandied peach.

OLD SOAK—Thank you, miss; I don't care for the peach, but I appreciate the spirit in which it is tendered.

MY WOOING

I HAVE sought her in sun, I have wooed her in rain,
 On snow-capped mountains, in fields of grain—
 Where waves are rhythmic, yet never tell
 The eternal secret they guard so well;
 Where the breeze of the forest is pure and bland,
 Or a storm-wind clutches the sea and land;
 In the mist-bound valley, the crowded mart,
 Or the starlit hush of the woodland's heart.

I have sought her in grief, I have wooed her in joy,
 As a gray-haired man, as a beardless boy;
 Through all the gamut of peace and pain;
 In measureless loss, or in fleeting gain,
 In the presence of death, in the presence of life,
 In the stillness of thought, in the passion of strife—
 I have wooed her in vain, I have worshiped her long,
 Sweet maid of the Muses, shy virgin of Song!

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.



A GOOD SUBSTITUTE

DUXBOROUGH—Aren't you rather behind the times, driving a horse?
 RICHMOND—Oh, I don't know. This horse is almost as vicious as an automobile.



HIS REASON

SMITHKINS—There's old Biffkins. I don't care to meet him. Let's turn this way. Last Summer, I requested a loan of twenty dollars.
 TIFFKINS—Well, he ought to have obliged you; he's rich enough.
 SMITHKINS—The trouble is, he did!



"GO to the ant, thou sluggard," advised the ancient philosopher; but the modern sluggard prefers to go to his uncle.

THE FOREST OF SHADOWS

By Madison Cawein

DEEP in the hush of a mighty wood,
I came to a place where the shadows dream,
The forest shadows, whose steps elude
The searching steps of the sun's faint gleam,
Builders of silence and solitude.
And there, where a glimmering water crept,
From rock to rock, with a slumberous sound,
Tired to tears, on the mossy ground,
Under a tree, I lay and slept.

Was it the heart of an olden oak?
Was it the soul of a bloom that died?
Or was it the wild rose there that spoke,
The wilding lily that palely sighed?
For, all on a sudden, it seemed I awoke;
And the leaves and the flowers were all astir,
With a prescient something of light and bloom—
'Twas a presence, a face like a wild perfume,
Or visible music—the face of her!

And all of the grief I had known was gone;
And all of the anguish of heart and soul,
And the burden of care, that had made me wan,
Lifted and left me strong and whole.
As once in the flush of my youth's lost dawn.
And, lo! it was night; and the oval moon,
A silvery spirit, paced the wood;
And there, in its light, alone she stood,
As starry still as a star a-swoon.

At first, I thought that I looked into
A shadowy water of violet,
Where the dim reflection of one I knew,
Long dead, looked up from its mirror wet,
Till she smiled in my eyes as the living do,
Till I felt her touch; and I heard her say,
With a voice as still as a rose-leaf falls:
"You have come, at last; and the silence calls.
Give me your hand; let us wander away.

"Let us wander away through the Shadow Wood,
Through the Shadow Wood to the Shadow Land,
Where the trees have speech, and the blossoms brood,
Like beautiful language, on every hand,
And the winds and the waters are song-imbued;

THE SMART SET

Where ever the voice of music sighs,
 And ever the dance of dreams goes on;
 Where nothing grows old; and the dead and gone,
 And the loved and lost, smile into your eyes.

"Let us wander away! let us wander away!
 Do you hear them calling, 'Come here and live'?
 Do you hear what the trees and the flowers say,
 Wonderful, wild and imperative,
 Hushed as the coming of dawn and day?
 They say, 'The world that you wander through
 Is a world of darkness, where all things die,
 Where beauty is dust, and love, a lie. . . .
 Come to us here! we are calling to you!'"

And she took my hand; and the trees around
 Seemed whispering something I could not hear;
 And the silent flowers, that strewed the ground,
 Seemed thinking something I felt was near—
 A beautiful something that made no sound.
 And we wandered on through the forest old,
 Where the moon and the midnight stood on guard—
 Sentinel spirits that shimmered the sward,
 Silver and sable and glimmering gold.

And then, in an instant, I knew! I knew
 What the trees had whispered, the winds had said;
 What the flowers had thought in their hearts of dew,
 And the stars had syllabled overhead.
 And she bent above me, and said, "'Tis true!
 Heart of my heart, you have heard aright.
 Look in my eyes, and draw me near!
 Look in my eyes, and have no fear,
 Heart of my heart, who died to-night."

**HE KNEW BETTER**

WIFE—Never mind, Jack, dear; though I know you are a little irritable,
 yet, if I had my life to live over again, I'd marry you just the same.
JACK—I have my doubts about that.

**A CHANGE COMING**

REPORTER—You are your own manager, are you not?
ACTOR—I am, just at present, but my wife is coming back from Europe
 next week.

AN EDITOR'S CONSCIENCE

By Richard Le Gallienne

GAY Warburton, the distinguished young editor of that fashionable monthly magazine, *The Nine Muses*, was making ready to leave his office for the day. On his desk stood a small brief-bag, which he was filling with manuscripts, for, as was his custom, he was taking work home with him. Four was chiming from the mellow clocks that give something of a cathedral character to the busy quietness of the Temple, and even solemnize, for a few moments, the unruly clamor of the Strand. It was a sunny afternoon in early June, and, through the open window, came a warm glitter and a tide of soft air, that insensibly stirred the senses and strangely touched the heart. Just the old Spring music in the blood! Just the day to appeal to the hard editorial mercy!

As the last clock ceased chiming, Warburton's secretary entered the room, a refined-looking lad, whose taste in literature Warburton trusted only less than his own.

"A lady particularly wants to see you, Mr. Warburton."

"Didn't you tell her that it was impossible? What's the matter with you, Railton? You know our rule about my seeing people. A manuscript, I suppose?"

"Yes; but——"

"Well, surely she can leave it. Say I'm sorry I can't see her; but, if she'll leave her manuscript, it shall have my personal attention at once."

"Yes, Mr. Warburton, but——"

"Well, I can't see her, that's all. Now, be a good fellow, and let me get away."

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So, Railton took the message, with evident reluctance. What he had wanted to say, when he stopped short at "but," was, "But she is so beautiful! You should see her for that, if for nothing else." Being a shy lad, however, he had not sufficient courage. Presently, he returned with a small packet.

"Would you care to take this home with the others?" he said. It was all he could do for her.

"All right. She's gone, has she? You can enter it to-morrow; I'm in a hurry." With the packet was a card. Warburton glanced at it.

"Jessica Tobin!—h'm! a pretty name."

"An awfully pretty girl, too," said Railton, blushing.

"Oh! that's it, is it?" said Warburton, laughing. "Good-bye, Railton—a nice editor you'd make, wouldn't you?" And, a moment after, he was on his way home with his little bag of manuscripts.

Warburton's office-windows looked out on to the Temple church, and within a yard or two of his stair-case was that quiet corner where Goldsmith sleeps. Involuntarily turning his head in that direction, as he did night and morning on his way to and fro, with a silent benediction on that friendliest among departed spirits, he noticed that a lady stood reading the inscription on the tomb. She was young—very young—tall and stately, and smartly gowned in black; and, as she looked up in Warburton's direction, as he looked in hers, he was struck, even startled, by her unusual blondness. Her face seemed imma-

terial in its excessive fairness. Who would have thought that human flesh could look so like to spirit as this, our mortal clay be capable of a refinement so exquisite as to seem indeed the very stuff of dreams? And, since the beginning of the world, was there ever anything so blue as those eyes!

Warburton's brown eyes took quite a deep drink at them before he turned away; and then a thought occurred to him.

"Can that be our young friend, 'Jessica Tobin'?" he said to himself. There seemed little doubt of it, for the lady of the manuscript had left his office but a few moments before himself. Unquestionably, it was she.

"No wonder Railton was smitten. So, that is Miss 'Jessica Tobin'! I wonder what her manuscript is like?"

While Warburton thus speculated, the blue eyes were fixed on his retreating form in a kind of reverence, the reason of which would have highly amused him had he known.

"I wonder if that is the editor?" Jessica Tobin was saying to herself. "Yes, I'm sure he is. Perhaps, my poor little manuscript is in that bag. Fancy—a real editor—I never, somehow, thought that editors were real. How wonderful! But how good-looking he is!"

This last thought raised a little doubt in her mind. She had never quite pictured editors as good-looking, or even young. A crabbed, rather musty old gentleman, with spectacles, had been more what she had expected. Still, she preferred to decide that Warburton was a real editor, in spite of his looks; for she was dreaming love's young dream of literature, and she had come so far toward the charmed circle of her dreams as to have seen an editor in the flesh! She must run away home at once, and tell Lulu all about it. "Lulu" was officially her companion. Actually, she was the dearest, truest, most sympathetic friend in all the world. And, incidentally, it may be said, Lulu thought Jessica's poems—well, Lulu had no words to express her admiration of Jessica's poems.

Something more of Jessica than her manuscript accompanied the editor as, meditatively, he strolled up Chancery Lane to his rooms in Gray's Inn.

"What a live face!" he said, half-aloud, to himself; "I believe it would shine in the dark!"

His rooms in Gray's Inn looked out over the old, park-like garden. He lived there for the sake of that garden, and the sun-filled leaves almost came into the room, as he leaned through his open window, and loved the lonely green peace thus paradoxically preserved in the city's noisy centre. The pleasure he took in it was typical of all his pleasures. They were lonely pleasures, the unshared, quiet satisfactions of the cultivated bachelor, who cared for society only when it gave him the same choice and finished pleasure as his exquisite collection of books, or that rare Sèvres which, for years, had never disappointed him. Warburton was not a dilettante or a recluse. He was a man of the world, but one who chose his world as carefully—well, as he chose the contributions for his magazine.

That magazine represented both an achievement and a renunciation. There had been a time when Gay Warburton had dreamed of an expression of himself more directly and recognizably personal—a poet, perhaps, or, at all events, an individually creative writer. Nor had he seemed, indeed, to fail as such. Several successful, and even distinguished, books stood to his credit with the world. The world was more than satisfied with him, and it would hardly be accurate to say that he had been disappointed in himself. It was more, perhaps, that the exertion necessary to the making of vital literature, the spiritual and mental aspiration and strain, had suddenly lost the old zest for him, and the wisdom of the ecclesiast suddenly came home to him, and stilled the pulses of his ambition.

Of making many books!—let the other fellows go on making them, if they chose. In future, he would be content to enjoy. Perhaps, the real reason for this cooling of his ambition

was that Gay Warburton was growing old. It was true that he was already nearing forty—though Jessica told Lulu that he looked thirty—yet, men have been known to retain their ambitions even at that age. Then, he had never had to write for his living. He had nothing to do in life, but live. When he worked, it was merely for fun. His magazine was a toy. He edited it to please himself, and, as so often with schemes where success is a matter of indifference, it would seem to have succeeded on that very account. There was, however, one other reason. It was superbly edited.

In it, that personality which had solitarily renounced more obvious expressions, found for itself a remarkably subtle and many-sided embodiment. It was impossible definitely, here or there, in this or that plain characteristic, to trace the informing spirit; but there was surely such a spirit animating the complex organism, and, in some elusive way, making *The Nine Muses* as much an expression of a single individuality as if its editor had written the whole magazine himself—though, actually, he had made it an inflexible rule from the beginning never to print a word of his own in its pages. *The Nine Muses* was, therefore, something very near and dear to Gay Warburton's heart. You may call it his final egoism, if you will.

Warburton had fallen into something of a reverie, looking out into the old garden, when his servant, bringing in tea, aroused him. Lighting a cigarette, he turned to the little bag of manuscripts. He smiled to himself at his absurdity, but there was no use in denying that Jessica Tobin's was the first he would look at. He made no attempt to deceive himself. He was frankly curious, and, perhaps, even a little anxious. The handwriting was at once picturesque and refined. The manuscript was a sequence of six sonnets, with very Rossettian titles. Warburton's heart sank, as he commenced reading, and, as he finished, he put the pretty manuscript down, with something of a sigh.

"Poor little girl!" he said, aloud. They were so hopelessly, hopelessly bad! Every superannuated image, every stereotyped fancy, every second-hand sentiment, every worn and weary phrase that had done duty in poetry since the beginning, seemed to have been industriously collected together in the small space of these six sonnets. They formed a veritable anthology of commonplace sentiment. And to think that they belonged to that face! Yes, that face—and the editor's thoughts strayed away from the manuscript to Jessica's young face of eager fire. But he was far too deeply read in the psychology of the contributor to allow these sad, bad verses to interfere with his pleasure in that beautiful face. He knew that the face and the verses had nothing whatever to do with each other. To assume that these verses represented what was behind the face, would be as absurd as it would be to assume that a young girl's insipid water-colors in any way represented her mind or her inner nature. Instead of—or, perhaps, as well as—painting sad little water-colors, Jessica wrote sad little sonnets, and seriously believed that they were poetry. There was no real difference, and some day, when real life came along to her, Jessica would give up writing sonnets, just as the other girls give up painting water-colors!

He turned again to the sonnets. Was not there one among them that could pass muster, or be made to do so with a little tinkering? He almost blushed as he caught himself thus suddenly prepared to compromise his lofty editorial ideal, and an echo of his own laughing jibe at Railton, hardly two hours ago, came back to him: "Oh, that's it, is it? A nice editor you'd make, wouldn't you?" Why, he would have seen a prime minister vainly beg admission to his magazine—if prime ministers did such things—rather than mar the perfect work of editorial art which it was his aim to make each successive number.

And here, for the sake of a pretty face, chance-seen but for a moment, he

was already prepared to violate a canon of excellence so long and so sternly cherished. What was it that had happened to him? It was certainly no facile susceptibility to beautiful faces that had thus betrayed him, else the standard of his magazine had long ago declined, for many were the fair faces, many the beautiful and noble ladies, that had found the editorial door inexorably closed against them. Warburton's world had long known that there was but one passport into his magazine—literary excellence. Besides, Warburton's private heart had for years been a stranger even to the thought of women, since a face loved in his youth had passed from the earth forever. An effortless, quite involuntary, faithfulness to that early vision had become so much a habit with him that the idea of his taking a personal interest in women never entered his mind. He had as little thought of marrying as of going into politics, or joining the stock-exchange. Women, save as decorative friends and social flora, were simply left out of the scheme of his life; nor with his choice circle of intimates, his books, his china, his old garden, and, above all, his magazine, had he ever missed them. Why, then, was he tempted to make so revolutionary an exception for the sake of this particular face, a face which it was more than likely that he would never see again? At the thought, he turned to the address on the pretty letter that had accompanied the manuscript. Jessica Tobin lived, as befitted her, in one of the dainty old streets of Mayfair. A "Peerage" stood among his reference books on a revolving case by his side. Almost furtively, he stretched out his hand to it, and turned over its pages. Yes, Jessica Tobin was the only child of Sir Richard Tobin, Baronet, whose name Warburton now recalled as that of a distinguished Indian civil servant. Two points at which their respective social circles probably touched, occurred to Warburton, and then, thoroughly disgusted with himself, he tossed the "Peerage" from

him, and, laying the manuscript aside, walked again to the window, and leaned there, gazing into the greenery.

He leaned there till, once more, his servant rescued him from his abstraction. He was dining out at Lady Southfold's—*she* had never been able to get into his magazine—and it was time to dress. He had leaned out of the window a long while.

Several days went by, and the fate of Jessica's manuscript still hung in the balance. Morning after morning, Jessica and her friend, Lulu, eagerly awaited the postman, but still the dreaded, "declined with thanks," failed to make its appearance. Was it a good or a bad sign, they asked each other, when an editor kept a manuscript for a whole week? Lulu was of opinion that it was a good sign; for, obviously, if an editor did not want a contribution, he would return it, at once. This, one need hardly say, was their first experience of editors.

At last—they could hardly believe their eyes—there came a letter with "*The Nine Muses*" printed on the outside. It was quite a small letter. So, it could not be the manuscript back again! Wildly, they tore open the envelope—and presently laughed and cried for joy; for the letter said that the editor of *The Nine Muses* had read Miss Tobin's sonnets with much interest, and that, while he was unable to make use of all of them, he would like to print the fourth of the series—provided she would consent to his making a few slight alterations, which should, of course, be submitted her in proof.

Little did the two girls think that this letter had meant even more for the editor to write than for them to receive, for it represented Warburton's decision in as nice a case of conscience as a man was ever called on to decide. Day after day, he had tried it over in his own mind, and, day after day, his duty toward his magazine had weakened, and his desire to bring happiness to that

haunting girl-face had gained strength. Finally, he realized, and, after his fashion, courageously admitted to himself, that with his sight of Jessica Tobin one dream had come to an end, and another begun—and, surely, the loftiest literary ideal might well cut a poor figure in comparison with all that holiness of young womanhood. To win that for his own— Yes! what was he not prepared to do? The end would surely justify the means.

But here, having decided one case of conscience, Warburton found himself confronted with another—one much more serious. He was not only doing violence to his long-cherished ideal, but he was about to use his public position as editor for his private ends. His acceptance of Jessica Tobin's manuscript—there was no disguising it—was an ugly misapplication of an official influence. He was deliberately falsifying his opinion of Jessica Tobin's work, not merely for the purpose of making her happy, but with the ultimate aim of winning her love. If he should win that love, it would be won by a lie. Besides, there was still a further consideration. He was deliberately encouraging her in dreams of ambition which he knew could never, by any possibility, be fulfilled. For her little temporary happiness, she would have to pay, some day, with bitter disillusion.

So presented, the acceptance of Miss Tobin's innocent little sonnet began positively to wear the aspect of a crime.

However, when there was real life-business afoot, Warburton was not the man to be turned aside by the fastidious qualms of a sentimental conscience. He believed that Jessica's literary ambitions would die a natural death in any case, and he finally decided that there could be no wrong in using them, while they lasted, for the furtherance of so real a thing as he felt his love to be. Lovers have to be brought together, somehow. That desirable end accomplished, the means employed pass

into the limbo of forgotten processes. Besides, if Jessica was not intended by nature to love him in return, his acceptance of her manuscript was not going to make her do so. So, the letter of acceptance went, and, in the course of a post or two, was acknowledged, in a letter of such naive, girlish gratitude that, involuntarily, the tears sprang to his eyes, and Warburton wished, with all his heart, that the poor child could have been the real poet she dreamed herself. However, the die was now cast, and presently the sending of proof, and the interchange of some little correspondence in regard to those editorial emendations, began for each of them a sense of intimacy, although their one meeting had been that casual encounter by Goldsmith's tomb—if, indeed, it was Jessica Tobin whose face had been haunting Warburton all this time, and if, indeed, that distinguished-looking young man, of whom Jessica often spoke to Lulu, was really the editor. Warburton sometimes smiled to himself at the possibility of a mistake, though he never really feared it for a moment. However, all his troubles were soon set at rest by his accidentally meeting Jessica at an evening party—an accident not entirely unforeseen.

"I knew it was you," he said, when they were introduced.

"And I was certain it was you," she replied, her lovely, young face more than ever alight with the gratitude she felt toward him.

"How good you have been to me," she continued. "I owe it all to you." She looked up into his face with a look that almost said, "You are the father of my mind. You have made me. Am I not yours?"

Warburton thrilled with intense happiness as he stood near her, within the aura of her exquisite youth, and an infinite tenderness for her, a longing to guard this fair, human flower from the rough winds of life, filled him with a passion that was half pathos. And, immediately, too, he felt, with a deep gratitude to the

unseen powers of life, that the mysterious rapport of two who are to mean everything to each other was established between them.

"She is my wife," he said in his heart.

And that night, when Jessica and Lulu were undressing together, Jessica told Lulu that she had been right about her editor. "And, oh, Lulu!" she added, throwing her arms round her friend's neck.

Six months after this, it was known to all their world that Gay Warburton and Jessica Tobin were affianced lovers. Sir Richard Tobin might perhaps have preferred a soldier or a peer for his daughter, and, had Warburton been merely a literary man, however distinguished, the course of true love had scarcely run so smooth. But, as Warburton's family was at least as good as Sir Richard's own, as, too, he was heir to considerable property, and was a writer only to amuse himself, Jessica was allowed to have her own way with her own happiness—a somewhat rare permission in this complicated world.

The marriage was fixed for the Spring, and, meanwhile, Warburton's position as a sort of literary father confessor assisted them to a greater opportunity of intercourse than they might otherwise have enjoyed. Scarcely a day passed without finding them together, bent over a book, or gravely discussing one of Jessica's little manuscripts. Very gently, Warburton was leading her toward that foreseen development which should fulfil his prophecy, and justify himself.

As her verses too often bore witness, Jessica had not always followed the best models, or lived at all intimately with the great masters. Warburton aimed to help her to an unconscious betterment of her taste, and a consequent raising of her literary standard. And he never, by any chance, read her anything of his own. There came a time when she noticed this.

"To think of my troubling you

with my poor little poems—when one stroke of your pen is worth more than I shall ever write," she said, one day, in a moment of illumination.

"I shall write no more," said Warburton, smiling, as he saw an opportunity.

"Write no more, dear?"

"Yes, I mean it."

"But why?"

"I'm too happy."

"If that were a real reason, I should never write another word."

Warburton smiled, a little knowingly, but said nothing. Presently, he continued: "No, really, I'm quite serious; and, if you think it over, you will see that very much writing springs from a state, if not exactly of unhappiness or dissatisfaction, at least from a state of unfulfilment. A large proportion of literature is made up of expectancy and aspiration. Satisfaction has little to say for itself—and, do you wonder, then, when I say I shall write no more?"

She put her hand in his, lovingly. "You make me feel guilty," she said; "as though I were robbing the world."

"The world will never miss my unborn books," rejoined Warburton, "and, anyhow, child, it will have to get on as best it can without them. Literature has led me to something better than itself. It has led me to Life, and Life has led me to you. Literature was only a part of the divine process, the end of which was loving you. Do you see?"

"Certainly I notice," said Jessica, archly, "that you have not written me one single poem since we knew each other."

"And, probably, I never shall. To begin with, I am not a poet; and, if I were, there could be no more disquieting symptom of the precarious nature of my love than, shall I say, a sequence of sonnets. The more poems a poet writes, the sooner he gets over his passion. It is the same with all his emotions—joy or sorrow. They evaporate in words. So, congratulate yourself that you are not marrying a poet."

"If that is true, oughtn't you to feel

frightened? See what a lot of poems I have written to you!"

"Ah, yes! but—" and Warburton took care to launch the shaft with a playful smile and caress of her hand—"but—women poets are different."

There were times when Warburton's conscience would live up again, and try hard to persuade him that he owed it to Jessica to confess the nefarious plot by which he had won her; but his robust sense continued to save him from that sentimental indulgence. After all, Jessica loved him as a man, not as an editor. Her poem had been nothing more than a medium of introduction. They were happy. Why run the risk of shadowing that happiness by a confession which Jessica was, perhaps, hardly old enough to estimate aright? Surely, the end had more than justified the means. Jessica was happy. He was happy.

"Where the apple reddens
Never pry,
Lest we lose our Edens,
You and I."

And an old literary counsel of Warburton's recurred to him: "Never reveal your process." No few writers have injured their own fame by telling the crowd how it was done. It was the same with life. Produce your effects, and let the world go on guessing about your processes.

Warburton soon began to see that it was happening with Jessica as he had anticipated. As she read the great poets with him, her volubility began to subside, and she grew harder and harder to please with such verses as she did write. It was evident that she would soon be self-condemned as a poet by her own growing taste as a critic. She would either cease writing altogether, or refine into a real poet. Warburton watched her growth, lovingly, smiling quietly to himself. One day,

her development expressed itself in a somewhat unexpected manner.

She came to him with the copy of the magazine which contained her sonnet. "I have just been reading this again," she said. "Why, my dear—how awfully bad it is! How in the world did you come to accept it? It is positively frightful—and the only good things in it are yours."

Here was an almost uncomfortable fruition of Warburton's hopes. For a moment, he was tempted to tell all; but a wiser voice prevailed, and he answered, gently: "Oh, no, dear, you are too hard on yourself! I printed it because I liked it—and I like it now even more than I did at first"—pretending to read it again. "Honestly, it's the best thing you've done, so far. Quite the very best," he repeated, smiling.

"Well, if I can do no better than that, I won't do anything—till I can."

"Not going to write any more, little girl? Oh, you mustn't say that! You make me feel guilty, you know—as though I were robbing the world."

"I believe you are laughing at me," she said, burying her head in his shoulder.

"Not for the world!" he rejoined.

"Well, you can laugh, dear, if you like, but I think I have come to the truth you were speaking of the other day. I seem to see that Literature was only a prophecy of Life, and love its fulfilment. And, somehow," she added, blushing, "I don't seem to mind so much about writing, so long as I have you."

"That's right," said Warburton, kissing her, tenderly. "You know that I came to that conclusion long ago—that day by Goldsmith's tomb—at ten minutes past four in the afternoon."

Now, does any one think that the editor ought to have told?



A DASHING woman is fascinating only when she dashes so deftly that her skirts show not a speck of mire.

A CHOICE OF FANS

NO wonder that I'm tired out,
 I've been—oh, gladly, without doubt!—
 Since ten A.M., or thereabout,
 With Nancy, shopping!
 It's safe to say that, good or bad,
 No fan in town escaped our mad
 Descent. And luncheon? Well, we had
 No time for stopping.

Her mind was fixed on something? Quite!
 It might be silk or lace, and might
 Be blue or green or black or white;
 Unique it must be!
 We sought where everybody seeks,
 Department-stores, among antiques,
 In basement shops unswept for weeks—
 What harm can dust be?

And, finally, at set of sun,
 She chose a kidskin, finely done
 In aquarelles—the only one—
 By some new Kneller.
 'Twas over! Lodgingward I hunched;
 'Twas over, and I could have punched
 (Remember that I hadn't lunched!)
 The smirking seller.

And I approved her choice? Why, yes!
 What else? Though it was something less
 (Intrinsically) I confess,
 That caught *my* fancy.
 I'm going back, stone-blind to flaws,
 To buy it for myself—because
 The geisha on its radiant gauze
 Looks just like Nancy!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



AND THEN HE DOESN'T PRAY

“DO you say your prayers every night, Robbie?”
 “No; some nights I don't want anything.”



SCIENCE is the great destroyer—he invented automobiles, serums, and the credit system.

AMONTILLADO

By John Regnault Ellyson

THERE, if anywhere, the stone might have ceased rolling and gathered moss (said Harry Walpole, teacher of art, worker in miniature, pastellist). Truly, I had there the big chance of my career. Say now, what do you think of two millions, a handsome woman, a life of love and landscape-painting? Do you like the picture? Back of me, pupils that couldn't be taught work under the blinding lens or with flimsy chalk, wild nights and boozy soubrettes, the inevitable wheel of Sir Will-o'-the-wisp, and the universal uncle—all the tragic agonies behind me in the past, and, before me, a mint of money and a native princess cleverer than twenty sultanas—nature to draw from, and a name to immortalize. A choice bit of perspective, isn't it?

During the Winter, I had gone to pieces. By the grace of my last creditor, I arrived in the new port with one suit of good clothes, several changes of linen, and a very large trunk nine-tenths full of old bottles and balled paper. You have remarked on the rigidity of my upper lip, I believe—and some few others have, also—but I can, at times, rely on my lip when my fingers have lost their cunning. A stiff neck and a stiff lip give you a certain air, which is of prime importance when you have only the air.

From the station, I was driven to the best hotel. While registering, I particularly directed the clerk to have his men move my luggage with especial care. After breakfast, I made my first visit; I called at the office of the mayor. To the attendant who took my card, I said:

"Mention to his Honor I'm in no hurry, whatever."

I was admitted at once. The mayor was a man of influence and wealth and good breeding; I had been previously assured of that. He received me cordially. I talked with him ten minutes, explained my aims, and showed him a few letters, among them one in which the Baron Vahl wouldn't have expressed himself so well if he hadn't been drunk. Then, I arose.

"I am certainly glad to meet you, Mr. Walpole," said the mayor, "and I am very glad you have resolved to settle in our midst. Now, tell me," he added, extending his hand as I extended mine, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing," I answered, smiling. "I thank you. I am going to hang up my sign in a corner of your beautiful city, and do something for myself."

The ring of the phrases had more effect than the baron's letter. He pressed my hand warmly, saying: "Let me know as soon as you are ready for orders, and, meanwhile, I shall talk over matters with my friends."

Things went on as they began. That evening, I interested the proprietor of the hotel in art. The fine suite of rooms I chose the next day, looked out upon one of the principal streets, and you entered them by a broad flight of marble steps. I had the apartments furnished in admirable style by the close of the week. How was it done? Why, do you know, despite what they say, there's much in a name. Of course, mine was as yet un-

known, but I happened to mention the mayor's in the most careless way at the right moment, and there was magic in it.

The hotel proprietor, the upholsterer, the chief official of the city and his friends, were my earliest patrons. Within six days after I opened my studio, I had sufficient work for a month.

I was never more industrious. I glued my nose to the easel. It was in Midspring, and I labored fourteen hours a day. During the Summer, I secured the services of two apt assistants, and yet continued to put in my fourteen hours daily. Strangely enough, my health improved, my appetite was marvelous, and, at night, I slept the sleep of the just.

Nor was I less discreet. I never dined outside the hotel, never visited any house in town, never attached myself to any associate. Self-exiled, professionally occupied, very prudent, you would hardly have known your friend. I indulged in none of those little fascinating games that once beguiled me; no extravagances, no follies—no dice or wine or women.

I had acquired quite a reputation, when, in the Autumn, the fashionable people flocked home. My pastels and my miniatures were in great demand. I need not say that, frequently, they were better paid for than executed.

At my studio, I met some charming and interesting women. On more than a dozen occasions, I was sorely tempted—but so was St. Anthony. The saint hid himself in the snow; I flung myself into my color-box. I subdued the flesh, and resisted the daughters of the devil—the vivacious Miss Lavere, who set her traps very adroitly; the scandal-loving wife of General X—, who even related some scandals of her own life by way of showing me that a conquest would be easy, and the dreamy, languid Madame Sartelli, who really fainted in my arms one day while we were very much alone.

You see, my friend, I had completely reformed. What would bo-

hemia have said of her scapegrace, her gay liver and lover? Could you have believed such things, if any one else had told you? And do you suppose I wasn't a little astonished myself? The fact is, I sometimes put my new character before me—as we arrange a model—and I would then exclaim: "Surely, my dear boy, you are altogether too incredible!"

But, alas! when, in the course of human events—the deuce, what poet am I quoting?—the incredible confronted the impossible, there was an awakening of emotion that couldn't be stilled. Why do I call her—the impossible? Oh, you shall know all in due time, and in due form. I am in no haste. To-night, I am in good voice, and in good company, and your wine will keep my poor wings from drooping. I like the quietude here—the breezy room, the sight of you, and the interest your countenance betrays.

Though I speak of an awakening of emotion, you mustn't imagine it was love at a glance. The meeting, commonplace, rather than romantic, occurred one evening in October—Saturday, at about five o'clock. Dressed with some taste, and leaning on my cane, I stood on the ground-step of the marble stairs at the entrance of my studio. While looking at two vigorous lads wrestling in the street, I caught a glimpse of an elegant figure near me, on the sidewalk. The lady, who received my whole attention, carried her head with a fine air, and moved faultlessly, handling her skirts with decided grace. She was soberly, but richly, attired. With a handsome face of rare oval, she had patrician features, pale blond hair and deep gray eyes. I was sure I had never previously seen her. As she approached, however, she seemed about to speak. I hadn't expected a greeting and, consequently, in drawing my hand forward, my cane slipped and rattled on the step. It was ugly for one who had commenced to pride himself on doing the proper thing, and I was pained to see the faintest perceptible smile on her serious face, as she passed on.

I stooped and recovered my cane—a task that always taxes a Christian spirit. When I raised my eyes, the lady, having turned, stood in front of me.

"Is this Mr. Walpole?" she inquired.

"You might recognize him," I replied, somewhat flippantly, as I lifted my hat, "by the ease with which he uses his 'stick.'"

"You must pardon me," she said, very gravely, "for smiling and moving aside to smile, but the fall of your cane reminded me of a ludicrous incident."

"It was absurdly awkward."

"Not in the least; but the incident recalled was, I assure you. I wish to ask a question, Mr. Walpole," she continued, hurriedly. "My mother, of whom I wish a good picture, cannot sit for one—she's in delicate health, in fact. Do you think a really admirable pastel could be executed from a photograph fairly well colored?"

"It would naturally depend on the quality of the print, and the correctness of the coloring. I will gladly see what can be done."

"At what time would it be best to call?"

"Well—say, Tuesday, at noon."

"I thank you very much," she said, slightly inclining her superb torso, and moving off like one of our great social dames.

I was more struck, perhaps, with the seriousness of her face than with its remarkable beauty.

"She is twenty-four, at least," said I, "and life at that age ceases to be comic, if one is single; and begins to be tragic, if one is married."

Remembering the exact number of my own years, I straightway determined to get rid of the last comic element in my life. I broke my cane across my knee, and flung the pieces in the gutter. Is it necessary to observe that I haven't since used a cane, or that I didn't catch fire at the first encounter?

On Tuesday, at noon, I heard the rustle of silk petticoats behind me, glanced up at the clock, and turned

carelessly on my chair. My glance at the clock was through pure habit; I had forgotten the appointment, forgotten the lady, and here she was—she of the pale gold hair and the luminous, dark gray eyes. I was surprised and, in putting down my crayon and mahlstick, the stick rolled away.

"One might almost say—!" I exclaimed, rising; but the calm, serious face made me pause.

"I regret so much, Mr. Walpole, that, owing to mother's illness, I haven't had a chance to look up the photograph, which has, somehow, been misplaced."

"I trust your mother's condition is more favorable to-day——"

"Yes, rather more favorable to-day."

"Won't you be seated," I said, "and rest a moment?"

"No, I am not fatigued—I drove here. I thank you."

"The pastel you are looking at," said I, "has cost me infinite pains. It is difficult to complete—always something lacking, as Madame Sartelli rightly says."

"It is lovely—a dreamy type of face."

"Do you think the expression of the lips is true?"

"Charming. I was thinking, perhaps, if you could find time in the next few days, you would be kind enough to call and get the photograph——"

"My days are fully occupied," I blandly remarked, "but, if some evening would suit as well——"

"Any evening you may choose," she replied; "to-morrow, or Thursday, or——"

"Let it be Thursday evening, then—say, at seven?"

"Between seven and eight," she suggested.

She handed me her card, gathered her skirts, smiled, just perceptibly, and soon was gone.

I felt flattered, and, when one feels so, he is generally benignly disposed toward himself, and apt to number over the qualities he possesses, and to imagine that such qualities are thoroughly in evidence. I don't mean

any more than I say, but I confess I thought her request was a little unusual, indicative of an unfettered spirit, and very remotely indelicate. I thought—and, as she had honored me, I honored her—that, aware of my reputation and my clean qualities, she had allowed her sentiments to be slightly touched—when, probably, mine only had been stirred.

Certainly, the charm of her manner, the calm, earnest face, the smile she had bestowed, made a deep impression, and, after she left, I recalled with pleasure how well the superior light of the studio revealed the beauty of her features, the rare tone of her blond hair, and the brilliance of her dark gray eyes. All at once, then, I looked at the card I held in my hand, and read thereon the name of C. Corday.

There are those who, being agitated and alone, converse with their shadow, their image in the mirror, with their soul, or what-not: some, like yourself, have been caught chatting with the moon; but, as you know, I talk with something more tangible—I talk with myself, simply and directly.

Sitting astride my chair, I said: "Mr. Walpole, will you look at this? Corday—C. Corday. How brief—how hatefully brief! Positively, it tells nothing—it would equally fit a maid or a harridan, a dwarf or a jockey of York. Could an intelligent, a beautiful woman write her name thus? She's intelligent and she's beautiful; and, yet, the name suits a barber's pole or a cobbler's sign—bah! It's paltry, this C. Corday! But the C stands for something, and how am I to know what? There's Caroline, Catherine, Christina—but which? There's Cora, that I don't fancy; Cordelia, that's not bad, and Chloe, that's googooish—pass on! Clarissa?—of course not! Cynthia?—Cynthia is very pretty, indeed; but Constance—Constance Corday would be admirable. God forgive me!—was ever a man more stupid? Why, isn't it the loveliest in all the world of names," I cried, "the one with which to conjure, the

one belonging to my earliest heroine—the magic, soft name of Charlotte Corday?"

I declare, my friend, the warm wave of feeling that crept over me was most curious. History seemed mingling with romance: "of stately, Norman figure, in her twenty-fifth year, of beautiful, still countenance." You see, I remembered Carlyle's words and, also, his quotation from Adam Lux. I didn't know, then, if it would be sweet to die with her, but I thought it would be charming to dine with her—the lady of seraphic hair and steel-colored eyes.

The card had dropped from my fingers, and, when I recovered it, I was pleased to note that No. 2, Falcon avenue, which completed the address, was in an extremely fashionable quarter.

At night, I strolled out on the road by moonlight, and renewed my acquaintance with the stars. It was late when I went, and much later when I returned, but the moon was still with me, and the stars. In coming back, I made a point of passing down Falcon avenue and by the homestead of the Cordays. The picturesque place occupied the half of an entire block. The grounds were raised many feet above the common level, and were encompassed by walls of olive stone. The mansion, a great, handsome square, looked like a château. Through the grille of the tall gate, I could see the dark plumes of the trees, cannas blooming here and there, rings of dahlias, the white, serpentine paths and broad stretches of velvet sward. There was about it all an air of refined isolation, an odor that the earth exhales in her choice corners, a glamour of fairyland. Ah, what a sorceress is your dear friend, the moon!

You mustn't infer, however, that daylight wrought many changes; when I repassed the spot just after dawn, there hung around the dwelling and the grounds the same air, the same odor, the same glamour.

All Wednesday I was drowsy. The vivacious Miss Lavere—she calls her-

self "a light specific for gravity"—brightened and amused me for an hour, but the day had many hours, and the hours dragged. Other people came in and went out; some of them might have gossiped. I was yawning, aside, and dying to hear something on a particular subject, but I dared not ask questions.

There was no need of consulting the calendar, when I awoke Thursday. I was palpitating, and an extra cup of coffee did me a vast deal of real good. I can recommend the same, if by chance you are subject to flighty action of the heart, and you may add a dash of brandy, if the weather is cool. I drank, however, nothing stronger than coffee in those days.

I finished drawing Madame Sartelli's pastel about noon, and, by-the-by, it was on this occasion that she fainted. Thankful for the diversion afforded, I played the part of physician with scrupulous propriety. They say her husband's a monster, who treats her not half so well as his hounds. They couldn't say that of me; she found me very sympathetic and considerate. As a general thing, when a woman swoons in your arms, you take her in your confidence, and confess too much; in her condition, madame might have answered inquiries touching the subject I had most in mind, and soon forgotten the matter, but I was amazingly prudent in this, as in other respects.

Isn't it singular how close a fellow may be to a woman, and how far off—how busy and earnest and affable by the side of a fair, hysterical patient, and how utterly preoccupied with the symptoms of his own malady? And isn't it rather singular, too, that, after counting the hours for two long days, one should, in the end, let slip a whole inestimable hour? I might have gone to "the château" at eight, but I delayed until nine. At the very door, I lingered, and gazed back over the beautiful grounds.

The servant was an English block, cruelly expressionless, but he man-

aged to conduct me into a small reception-room on the left of the entrance—a room well lighted and prettily decorated, cozy, and fitted for informal visitors. I didn't have to wait. In a moment or so, the lady appeared, attired, as suited the occasion, simply, daintily, with quiet taste. You have seen pictures that reminded you of sonatas, and you have heard music that suggested the perfume of woodlands. She was a picture, a melody, a perfume—in brief, a rarely beautiful woman.

No, there was no babbling of couplets; we spoke in prose.

"I must apologize for being late," said I.

"If you had come earlier," she replied, "you might have been disappointed. I have just found the photograph, tucked away among some old laces—I came upon it by a miracle. The coloring of it, I did a few years ago——"

"Exquisite, nevertheless."

"Do you fancy a really good pastel may be made from this?"

"Unquestionably."

"The photograph itself is a reprint, and very excellent, I think."

"Beautiful! Why——"

"It was done in Florence," she interposed.

"You have visited Florence?"

"I lived in the via Principe Eugenio for two years."

"And I in the via Petrarca, beyond the Roman gate."

That was enough. We had breathed the divine Tuscan air, imbibed the glories of the famous city. We were strangers no longer. Take two people who have even cordially hated each other for an age, bring them together, and let Florence—if they know Florence—be the subject, and they converse as amicably as old comrades. I can't understand how it is—but the charm is never failing.

We talked and talked for a long while, unaffectedly, with animation, with pleasure, and, before leaving, I ventured to observe:

"Miss Corday, is it permissible to

ask your Christian name? I had an idea——"

"What did you suppose it was?" she questioned, with frank good-nature.

"Charlotte, of course."

She laughed now, for the first time, and it sounded very musical.

"It is Cicely."

"Cecilia!" I exclaimed.

"No; it's the plain English Cicely. My surname is also English, and not accented on the last syllable. We have no French blood in our family, so far as I am aware; we are a calm, serious, practical set."

Reposeful and rather serious and delightfully practical, she certainly was, but intelligent and engaging, moreover, with the manners of one who had traveled, and the refinement of one who frequented the inner circles of the social world.

I brushed everything else aside the next day, and worked continually on the pastel. The following day, I was not in the least satisfied with what I had done, and began all over again. My enthusiasm never abated; my energies never flagged. As a result, the pastel pleased me immensely, and, being proud of what I had achieved, I left it on the easel in a conspicuous part of the studio.

I had finished the work early Tuesday, and, at noon, when Miss Laveré, accompanied by her woefully sedate aunt, came in, I was busy reddening the cheeks of General X——'s wife—madame in miniature.

"Oh," cried Miss Laveré, "why, here's Mrs. Corday!"

I turned, expecting to see the invalid, but it was the pastel that had evoked the remark. I advanced and made my salutation.

"You know the Cordays?" inquired the pretty minx.

"That is designed from a photograph," said I, evasively. "I am doing it for Miss Corday."

"What a creature she is!" exclaimed Miss Laveré.

"Nellie!" whispered her aunt.

"Ah, nobody knows her," persisted

the girl, "but I like her, Mr. Walpole. I like her pluck—the set wouldn't receive her while her father lived, and, when he died and the full extent of his fortune was known, she ignored the set. She lived in Paris and in Florence for years. I hear she's splendidly educated, extremely accomplished, and I think she's very, very beautiful. Of course, you are doing other work for her—do let me look at it, Mr. Walpole!"

"I assure you, Miss Laveré, I have nothing but this."

"How strange! Does she like this work of yours?—it is so lovely!"

"She hasn't examined it yet."

"See, mumsy, those heavenly eyes of Mrs. Corday—how sweet! Mr. Walpole, that angel's husband was looked down on because he once sold liquor in the common way——"

"Why, Nellie!" murmured her aunt.

"Oh, no, we can drink as much as we please, mumsy-dumsy——"

"Nellie!" exclaimed her aunt, extremely shocked.

"—but we mustn't sell the stuff. It seems everything he touched turned to gold. I wish pa had his touch; I'd get myself painted by Mr. Walpole in oil—full-length. Wouldn't that be charming?"

"How could it be otherwise?" said I, with a profound bow, which I allowed her to interpret according to her humor.

The light-haired, pretty, gay, tricksome Miss Laveré was, in fact, never more charming than at that moment, and I was never more interested in anything than in what she had related. I felt as if I had run a great way forward, and suddenly paused—my heart was beating at somebody's gate, and somebody was waiting for me. Ah, what dreams we have in vivid daylight, with moving life around us, among familiar realities!

In the evening, I put the pastel in a case and, being unwilling to entrust it into vulgar hands, I carried my work home myself. Miss Corday was surprised, pleased, captivated—but I won't tell you what she said. The little detail of payment was done with

delicacy; the cheque, entirely written by her, seemed so much a part of my fair patron that I kept it for many, many weeks.

She had received me in the parlor, the front one of double parlors, on the right of the entrance. This sumptuous apartment was brilliantly lighted, but the other was in shadow—in semi-darkness. The effect was uncommon, and I could not but think how typical the two rooms were—how typical of my present and my past. Here, uninterruptedly, we conversed, beginning with Florence and Dante, and ending with Paris and Heine. Together, we glanced through a choice variety of prints—a few softly colored, rare photographs, many etchings and precious drawings, a selection that doubtless cost a small fortune. Among these were three etched heads of Heine, and she showed me a fourth head of the poet in profile—an exquisitely drawn copy, with the monogram, CC. I had much to say of this, and she had much to say of Heine.

Once and again, I sought to discover her sentiments regarding the social world, but she frankly ignored the world outside the world we knew. Clever and reserved, she was impersonal on this occasion, yet inexpressibly fascinating. With one of her stamp, I could afford to make no mistakes. I entertained a secret feeling, indeed, as the foolish will, that I had created a favorable impression, and that the impression might be strengthened by every reputable artifice of attention and care and restraint.

But, as time lightly passed, I was perplexed in trying to find an excuse for another visit—I, always so full of resources. How could I request a privilege she might deny? Could it be left entirely with her? Would she drop a word, and make me happy? Surely, she could see what I wished; is it possible for an intelligent woman not to perceive such things? I flattered myself; I hoped for the best.

Still, when I rose to leave, though she thanked me again for my promptness, and for the beauty of my work,

she didn't breathe the word I so ardently longed to hear. I wavered, and, at last, I said, almost tenderly:

"May I venture to ask that, at some time, when your mother's health permits, you will allow me to see her? I became deeply interested in her face—I shall never forget the outlines!"

She slowly raised her clear, calm, large, strange eyes.

"Yes," she said, quietly, "yes, of course."

Then, she inclined her figure with incomparable grace, and I bowed.

Alone, in the coolness of the night, I found a dozen means by which I might easily have accomplished my aim. Excuses? Why, there were twice a dozen excuses now at my tongue's end, and means and ways enough, yet how lamentably I had acted.

To keep yourself, as I had done, out of the clutches of women is extremely perilous. You grow so innocent; you sink into a kind of second childhood. Your wits cloud, and you lose your fine sense of self-control. Experience, dash, gallantry—these come not at your beck, and so the nude pigmy struts in and conquers—Love with his quiver of briars. The wisest of us, then, puerile and unsophisticated, drop into fooldom; you are a baby-boy once more with a rattle, and the rattle is your heart.

During the next month, I had an ample season in which I could toy with the rattle. Novembers, in the main, are not bright, and the November of that year was a month of blue Mondays. Work pulled me through the days; the long nights were intolerable. I read Heine; I attended the opera and the services at St. Paul's; I went everywhere, looking for what I never found. No one was visible at the homestead when I passed—neither mistress nor attendants; on the street, I caught no glimpse of anybody resembling my ideal; I never saw the name in the papers, never heard it mentioned. My friend, of all rattles, the heart rattles most; mine affected my appetite, and made me superla-

tively sad, and, all the while, I demeaned myself like a saint—like a dunce. But, near the close of the month, I formed a resolution; I determined to banish the gloom by introducing the Graces. The general's wife and Miss Lavere and Madame Sartelli were not fond of one another, and I fancied it would be roguish and sportive to bring them together at my studio some evening, in comedy-fashion.

That was my idea; the details, ingenious and novel, might be devised and arranged at leisure. The second of December being a splendid, invigorating day, I shook off my business cares, and dipped into the country, taking no definite course, but rambling far and wide. Near sundown, probably about a mile from town, on my way back, I seated myself on a stone by the roadside. While resting there for a little, and thinking over the comedy, in which my characters should be led somewhat of a blind dance, wined, bewildered and amused, and myself diverted, I suddenly heard the roll of wheels and the patter of hoofs, and, before I could glance around and shade my eyes—the sun was on the level of the road against me—the horse had been checked, and the dog-cart brought to a stand.

"I saw you by mere chance," said a charming voice that set all my pulses beating. "Climb up, and I'll take you home."

"In behalf of the tramp, for I must look like one," said I, seating myself, "I thank you sincerely."

"You are still here, and still painting our beauties?"

"Not painting, but panting just now," I replied, "and even, as you see, boasting of my agitation. After my morning's work, I rambled all the afternoon, and you caught me fagged and resting for a moment, and the pleasure, the wholly unexpected pleasure——"

"I am glad I saw you. Mother wouldn't have forgiven me if——"

"And your mother——?"

"She often spoke of you during our trip."

"You have been away, then?"

"To New York, for a month. My sister resides there. The trip didn't improve mother—altogether, it was dull. I prefer—I much prefer home or Paris."

"I applaud your choice—both are enchanted haunts."

"If there were a road to Paris—do you note the speed at which we are going?"

"Indeed, I am amazed!"

"I have had her only two weeks."

"What's the lovely bay lady's name?"

"Charlotte," she answered, with a short laugh.

"She moves like the wind, and with such grace! 'If there were a road to Paris'——?"

"But, as there isn't, won't the road home suit as well?"

"Infinitely better."

"In the jockey's phrase, we are getting there."

"Do you know, your house resembles a château I have seen——"

"What château?"

"One I have seen, but where I can't say."

"Perhaps, in a picture?"

"For the life of me, I can't remember."

"Strange! Why, the house was designed by father, who, I am sure, never saw a château."

"He created a masterpiece, certainly, in his home. I was passing there some weeks ago, in the moonlight——"

"Walking in the moon, Mr. Walpole?"

"Seeking artistic effects—and I was struck with its likeness to the model, and ever since I've been trying to recall the lost château."

"So, you have lost a château!"

"And found another in a dream, under the moon——"

"And here we are—in the after-glow."

"The little lackey near the gate—how much like a true page!"

"You are thinking of Bradley's etching?"

"No," said I, alighting and offering my hand; "I am wondering who the gentleman is, coming this way."

"My attorney," whispered she, and, in a moment, added aloud:

"Mr. Walpole—Mr. Grinan."

He and I bowed in silence. This man of forty, fresh from the barber's and irreproachably dressed, presented a marked contrast to your dusty bohemian; but, if he had the look of a bright print, I had yet the air of one who could make prints—the superior air of the artist.

"The Newman water-color, I recently secured," said Miss Corday, "will be on private exhibition next Tuesday; you'll remember?"

"I thank you; I shall be there," said I.

"James, take Mr. Walpole to The Giffrey, and see that he doesn't give Charlotte any sugar."

In front of the hotel, Charlotte, however, munched candy like a bay-adere, and got compliments from all sides.

Most fortunate, and completely happy again, I turned over a clean leaf in the book of my career, and began anew; no more thoughts of the Graces, and of the comedy in which they might have disported; I had rekindled emotions and the drama of real life, with which to concern myself.

I mention the exhibition-visit of the following week, not, as you doubtless fear, in order to describe rapturously Newman's lovely water-color, but in order to speak briefly of my hostess's bewitching usurpation of the rights that—what nonsense! I should have said—in order to speak briefly of the queen's exercise of a queen's prerogative. We had been talking of art for some time, when the course of our conversation was abruptly changed, by a question from Miss Corday.

"Tell me, would an engagement for Thursday interfere with any of your deep-laid plans?"

"Not in the least; I have no deep-laid plans for Thursday morning."

"But Thursday evening?"

"Ah, still better! I'll be only too glad——"

"I have seats for the Zeldenrust recital," she said, "and I thought you'd like to be one of the party."

"I'll be delighted, indeed."

"Quite a small party, select and congenial——"

"And the party consists of——?"

"Two—ourselves!"

"Delightful! Precisely at a quarter after eight, I'll drive here——"

"I'll have my carriage sent for you, then, fifteen minutes earlier."

We had no more to say of art that evening; we prattled of music.

The night of the recital was a glory. The lady was inconspicuously attired, and her cavalier wore the usual black and white—they hadn't very prominent seats, and they assumed them without any fanfare, and yet, immediately, they became the observed of all. Programmes fluttered; silks rustled; there was a breeze of brisk comment.

Simultaneously, she and I uttered, in an undertone, each an audacious compliment to the other:

"See what the artist does!"

"This happens when the queen comes!"

We smiled and calmly surveyed the world. Everywhere, I saw lovers of art, and patrons of the artist. General X—— and his wife occupied a *loge*; running up her lorgnette, she leaned toward her husband, and I imagined I could hear the exclamations crackling at the old chap's ear. Miss Lavere, glittering like dew, and dressed in green, was also in sight—the little slim stem of her and her cosmos-head in active vibration. Madame Sartelli, chained to the sleeve of "the monster," sat not far off and, glancing back, bestowed upon me a dreamy nod and a languid smile. But there were others—unnamed, because so innumerable. Indeed, the gathering was extremely large and brilliant.

The audience faithfully rendered unto Zeldenrust, as he conquered, the things that are the master's—enthusi-

asm and applause. The performance opened with the "Waldstein Sonata" of Beethoven, and closed with the most melodious of Liszt's Rhapsodies. These, and the intervening numbers of Weber and Schubert, of Schumann and Chopin, the great pianist interpreted with unrivaled skill and surpassing charm. Once, he played an emotional, dainty composition of his own, and, once again, a piece I had never heard—a brief, all too brief, capricious bit, in which the sirens sang, and the waves murmured. As this was concluded, my *camarade* touched my arm; I turned, but, before we could exchange words, Zeldenrust sounded the first chords of Weber's "Polacca Brillante."

At home, after the recital, we naturally talked of music. Music, like the sea, is a beautiful, interminable theme, and we drifted along delightfully. Here and there, odds and ends of purely personal interest came up—little experiences, little reminiscences, little sentimentalities.

"My mother played well," said I, "and loved to play. I think it was from her I got my fondness for music. When vexed or saddened, she always calmed or consoled herself with Beethoven or Chopin. As a brat, I would often go into the room, while she played, choose a dark corner, creep behind the curtains, or between the cushions of some old chair, and sit there and listen. I used to like being under cover, as it were, so that I might build castles, or rejoice, or weep, as freely as I pleased."

"Oh, how exceedingly girlish!" she cried.

"Then, you don't approve——?"

"Why shouldn't I?" said she, raising her moist, gray eyes to mine. "I've done that myself so often!"

"And your mother plays?"

"Yes, even now."

"And you—of course, you——?"

"I play, sometimes."

"Do you know, I've wondered why I haven't seen a single musical instrument among the many lovely things here."

"You haven't gone far enough," she answered, laughing softly; "back of the rear parlor is a room entirely set apart for——"

"Oh, St. Cecilia, be merciful and lead me there!" I pleaded; and, that my words might not seem in bad taste, I put on a certain air of drollery.

"No, no, not to-night," she said, mimicking my manner; "no, I dare not. Believe me, to-night that place is haunted—the Zeldenrust spirit is moving there. But, if you should happen this way Thursday evening, then—I'll see. Perhaps, I'll let you creep in behind the curtains, and be a girl again!"

"I'll promise I'll be a good girl—attentive as a bird, and still as a mouse," I said.

The whole of the next day, I was industriously employed, but, during the morning and afternoon of Thursday, I did nothing at all. I dedicated the evening to the evening star. From eight till eleven, I was where I should have been—in, possibly, the most unique corner of the known world.

So I thought, at least. The room, symmetrical and rounded and none too spacious, was the true, palpitating bosom of the mansion—perfect, colored like old ivory, warm. To me, it was spiritual as a shrine, yet voluptuous as a seraglio. I couldn't have told why it seemed so, any more than I could have explained the union of the virginal and the seductive in the nature of its mistress, or why she was, by turns, practical and capricious, frigid and affable, serious and free. A lover notes, but doesn't analyze; he's a child who lives by what he looks on, by what he feels.

She of the light gold hair and dark gray eyes—she had pressed my hand, and spoken her words of welcome. She had led the way through the parlors into this apartment; she had enjoyed my surprise. Here, she allowed me to admire what I saw; she paused, and showed me every object—the statuettes in the little niches, the downy trappings, the bronzes, the enamels, the gems.

"This is where I hide," she said, "my pet nook, my musical shell!"

I had no doubts of that—the place was so essentially a part of her; the subtle grain and the aroma of the woman were here—the bloom of her flesh, the breath of her lips.

In front of the small, open grate, we came to a large, silky easy-chair on which she laid her hand.

"And here's where I curl up and doze," she said. "Sit down. I know you love old chairs—the 'duchess' is a dear one."

I sank between the great curved arms.

"I am already in love," I answered, "hopelessly in love with your jolly, dear 'duchess'!"

"She has a capacious lap."

"Dove-soft and motherly."

"She breathes repose."

"She smells of jonquils."

Thus, in a jocund vein, my companion and myself—she sitting on a tall hassock close by—commenced a conversation that was sometimes rather paradoxical, sometimes flippant and sometimes almost philosophic. Whenever the emotional cropped up, it was cut out or left to cool, and that is the reason I don't quote the conversation—which lasted an hour, ending as it began, in the very same humor.

"While listening to you," she said, "I've shamefully neglected your brother."

"My brother?"

She glanced at the piano.

"Oh, yes—the other instrument," I said.

She made merry over this remark of mine, arose, and, for a moment, leaned against the silk-velveted back-rim of the chair. Her hands were here nestled near my face, and her exquisite head drooped above the fragrant, slim, white fingers.

"My God!" I whispered.

"What are you saying?"

"A kind of prayer."

"Indeed!"

"I say—if I am dreaming, my God, don't let me wake!"

"Nonsense! there's plenty of time to dream after one's dead."

"Do the dead dream?" I questioned.

"You are asking riddles, and behaving like a bad girl!"

"I am as nice a girl as a man can be."

"Now, you are protesting—and you promised to be still!"

"I'll be still," I murmured, in a small voice.

"That's right. If you would hear things, don't stir; sit where you are."

"But you'll permit me to turn over the leaves of your music?"

"There are no leaves to turn; I play from memory. Sit here, and listen here under cover," she added, repeating my own words with bewitching roguery. "You may build castles, or rejoice, or weep, as much as you please."

"I dare not rebel," said I, "though you abandon me——"

"To the jolly, dear 'duchess'!"

She smiled, and swept across the room.

What she undertook, I knew, would be intelligibly done, but I was amazed when she caressed the keys—the touch was so firm and velvety, the phrasing so clear and fine. The first piece was the singular little Ballade which Zeldenrust had performed, and, before she finished, I was at her side.

"What!" she exclaimed, "must I tie the tomboy in the chair?"

"Pardon me—you play divinely."

"No plaudits," she insisted, "no noise!"

"One question, then: who composed this melody?"

"Poindexter."

"Poindexter?—I don't know the name."

"You should know the man," she said. "I met him in Richmond, last Winter. He had written twelve of these tone-poems; he played them for me, and I begged copies. This one, my favorite, I transcribed and sent to Zeldenrust, and he played it like the master he is—how it would have gladdened the sad heart of——!"

"Is he so interesting?"

"As interesting as a beech-trunk—to the herd."

"Sinewy and picturesque?" I queried.

"Yes, and a man most difficult to animate, but quite unlike others when aroused—sardonic, peppery, charming! You can't tell whether he's expressing his real opinions, or dramatizing——"

"How he resembles his eulogist!" I cried.

"He's more like Heine," she rejoined, "much more like Heine. Once, while chatting with me, he declared that nightingales didn't exist, that the wonderful stories about them were all myths, and he went a great length to prove the truth of his assertion. I remember he said that, according to report, Potsdam was celebrated for its groves and its nightingales. There he hoped to discover what he had searched for elsewhere in vain; and so, going far out of his route and in the right season of the year, he visited the famous spot—and what did he find? The city of Potsdam was in place, he said, just as the map shows, but positively there were no groves in Potsdam, and no nightingales!"

With a laugh, she turned and played a few bars.

"I know what's become of the nightingales," I said, in the lull of the music.

"I pray, do tell me," she pleaded.

I answered in pantomime. I glanced at the beautiful fingers on the keys, and gently seized her hand; but, before I could lift the fingers to my lips, they were somehow cunningly withdrawn.

"And what happened to the nightingales?" she asked.

"They sang no more," said I, with all the grace at my command, "they sang no more after Heine, the prince of them, died."

"There! you may kiss my fingers for *that*—if you will then go and sit down and let my recital proceed."

I pressed my lips on her hand with tenderness and delicacy, and took

back to my chair a sensation of delight that an armful of Madame Sartelli had failed to awaken.

Man isn't a very complex instrument, yet there are only certain people who can play upon him properly—certain women, at odd times; and this one, thoroughly accomplished, performed successfully, during the rest of the evening, on two of us—while touching the keys of my hump-shouldered brother in rosewood.

The music of the fascinating minstrel, and the charm she exercised, stirred all the poetry of my nature, and, more than once, as occasion offered, I tried hard to utter my sentiments; but I couldn't—the fair lady was always too unimpressible or too daintily perverse, always too serious or too gay.

At eleven, in rising to leave, I asked when I might have the pleasure of seeing her again, when I might call. She chilled me by mentioning the twenty-fifth of the month.

"And this is the fifteenth!" I said, in the tone of a martyr.

"Mother and I want you to dine with us, Christmas," she said, simply and directly. "Sister and her husband will be here, and so will Mr. Grinan."

"I shall be happy——"

"Is it a date, then?" and she laughed as she spoke.

"Most assuredly it is," I declared, "but a date that's ten days removed—an age!"

"We live in what they call a rapid age!"

"Rapid?—yet, it seems to me often that Time sits down, and dozes by the roadside."

"I don't doubt it; I picked him up one day, and showed him how a mare could speed."

"Am I so old, Miss Corday?"

"Am I so juvenile, Mr. Walpole, and so frivolous that I'm not expected to remember a pleasing episode?"

"Ah, now I'm young once more—at a word, I'm a blushing lad, lingering, hesitating, swinging on the gate

beside a peerless girl, and counting up in his heart——”

“The marbles he has won?” she questioned, with mocking gravity.

“You didn’t fancy the sketch I was drawing?”

“The drawing was, perhaps, a little crude, I thought.”

“Do you know what the poor fellow has lost?”

“Do you know what he has gained?”

She was cruel and she was kind. With a school-girl’s wilfulness, she wiped out ten days of my life by banishing me for that extravagantly unreasonable period, but, in a woman’s charming way, she promised to bring me then into perfect contact with herself by introducing me among the intimates of her household. Possibly, she felt that I would value more dearly the privilege prefaced thus, and that, under the circumstances, I would act with wisdom and greater discretion, and so prove my capacity for appreciating fully other favors she might bestow. This is the consoling view I took of the matter, and yet I suffered.

On Christmas evening, however, she made ample amends. I was received like an old friend, most cordially welcomed, and then treated to a little piece of intelligence I could by no means have anticipated.

“I am extremely vexed,” she said, though seemingly not vexed at all. “It happens, mother is slightly indisposed and can’t be with us; sister and her husband, who were to have arrived yesterday, will not reach here till to-morrow, and Mr. Grinan has been called from town at the very last moment. Could anything be more provoking? I was almost sure *you* wouldn’t materialize,” she added, with a smile.

“And, even in this, you have been disappointed.”

“You see I am not weeping!”

“Indeed, your composure amazes me.”

“We can, at least, be cheerful, and dine quietly——”

“And talk poetry and hear music?”

“Yes, you may talk poetry, and I will play,” she replied, with gaiety.

Near me, in the rear parlor, under the brilliant lights, she was absolutely dazzling. Whether sitting or moving, she always had supreme grace and that suggestion of leopardine suppleness we admire in women. Hitherto, I had seen her only in high gowns like a prude, and in long sleeves. The evening dress, in one of those indescribable shades of mauve, now left bare the bewildering fairness of her neck and arms. The mobile, exquisite beauty of her face seemed like still marble one moment, and then grew Sultana-like—perplexingly radiant. Her wonderful head glowed, hooded with its opulent mass of pale gold floss, fine as the silkiest pappus. And her eyes! what might be said about her eyes, clear and dark and gray, with such luster as we see in rare skies after the sun goes down, or on waters, and never anywhere else, except, perchance, on goodly sword-blades of Damascus.

For a while, I didn’t talk poetry, though I imbibed the very essence of it. Ordinarily, it isn’t easy to consign and deliver at the same time, especially in matters involving the transfer of idealistic coin, and my task was rendered the more difficult because my companion, herself poetical and ingenious, adopted every device of coquetry to hinder prompt and honest delivery. At the end of half an hour, after vain attempts and many wiles, as I got to be boldly lyrical and personal, and she settled into a receptive mood, dinner was announced.

If you wish to do anything with a man, my friend, put a good meal at his disposal. You may rob him without conscience, or murder him in cold blood, or merely beguile him, but it will be less cruel if you first see that he is well-filled. The considerate act of nourishing him, the animal will deeply appreciate, even though he may languish or die in the next moment. I didn’t die, as you are aware; I was entertained and most sumptuously feasted.

The dinner was a formal affair only in being served in the usual fashion and much prolonged. I couldn't regret the time so spent; in fact, I never enjoyed a variety of choice dishes more, in my life. I had breakfasted at eleven with a small appetite; I dined elaborately and at my ease, and in the presence of an enchantress.

Some of our sex, fastidious and cynical, hold that a woman at the table never pleases; that she's either too airy or too sluggish; less than coy or more than free; one who nibbles or one who gorges—that, in a word, she spoils the best repast. But a truly beautiful woman is everywhere and always beautiful, whether she eats or sings, listens or sleeps, reproaches you or surrenders.

My companion's cleverness and charm equaled her singular beauty. I relished the good cheer and the admirably varied fare, though I touched, as she did, the wines very lightly. Observing this, she said, incidentally, there was but one wine which tempted her, of which she drank a glass or two once or twice a year—"a notably dry wine," said she, making a melancholy face, "that suits a peculiarly dry, old girl—Amontillado."

"Amontillado," she repeated, in richly liquid tones, as the wine was brought in.

"My grandfather, a sea-captain," I gravely remarked, "he, too, loved Amontillado, of which he used to tell us marvels. I remember tasting it frequently when a boy, and never since. You have read, of course, 'The Cask of Amontillado'?"

"Yes, and 'La Grande Bretèche,' also."

"You are a Balzacian—I scarcely thought that," I whispered, with an air of mock-reproof.

"I have often wondered," she added, "whether the American or the Frenchman borrowed the pivotal idea, or whether both were borrowers."

"Oh, the walling up! Well, I can't tell you—really. But, Miss Cor-day," continued I, serio-comically, putting the accent on the second

syllable of her name, "I trust you have here no sinister designs against a—a modern, innocent of the revolutionary policies of his government! At the end of an excellent dinner, I should hate to be cooped up between four cold walls!"

She laughed, heartily, and we drank Amontillado.

Doubtless, it has been done, but a fellow can't make love rightly across a festive board, which, however reduced in compass, is still a kind of rampart dividing him from his "sweet enemy." There should be no viands or pastry between the divinity and the adorer. The true flow of the soul, indeed, comes after the feast.

It was seven o'clock when we sat down, and nine when we arose from the table. We passed slowly through the corridor into the music-room. She was telling me the story of the Baron Vahl and his cane—the incident of which she was reminded at our first meeting—how the baron, sadly enamoured and "tortured a leetle," resolved to make a declaration, and chose the steps of St. Peter's for the purpose; how he leaned upon his cane, and how he spoke, and how his ardent protestations suddenly became interlarded with the vulgarisms of three or four languages, when his walking-stick, like a thing of evil bent on performing miracles, walked off and rolled and clattered, alighting and rebounding, shamelessly capering and careering from point to point, from step to step.

As she finished the story, she was sitting before the piano, softly fondling the keys, her face turned toward me—her marvelous face, the embodiment of laughter and witchery and radiance. I have seen sights, I have seen visions; but none matched this one. If ever I stood on the borders of Paradise, if ever the senses were intoxicated, if ever the blood danced in the veins, it was then, and it was then that I should have spoken; but she, laying her hand quickly on my hand, and looking at me with love in her eyes, hushed my words.

"Now, be good," she murmured,

between little amorous pauses; "go and sit there—in my nest—in the lap of the 'duchess.' You understand—I must get rid of the baron—this baron and his cane! Yes, let me play; then—I will come, and you may tell me—what you please."

She lowered her lashes, gently disengaged her hand from mine, swerved aside, and struck the opening bars of the "Appasionata."

She played. From the nook of the jonquil-scented chair, I watched and listened. I watched the movements of her nimble fingers, the exquisite profile, the light on the hair, the rise and fall of the shoulders, the swaying of the rounded, supple torso. She was superb. The last scene had delighted me; there was caprice without perversity. She was a wonderful woman; she knew the deeps of the heart. She was far-seeing and gracious, subtle and kind; she knew the chords that agitated, the chords that calmed and consoled.

She played. In the warmth of the room, in a room itself perfection, lolling between the arms of the dear "duchess," I enjoyed what I saw, what I felt, as I had enjoyed a while before the agreeable feast, the magical Amon-tillado. I was so snugly ensconced, so reconciled with myself, so contented! Resistance was at an end—she loved me! She had said that she would come; she had promised that I might speak. And I should then breathe the most delicious sentiments, the most delicious vows.

She played. Beethoven gave place to Schumann; Chopin followed, and Weber, with his voluptuous cadences. I was in the languid mood of one who is being caressed. Like a slave, I had eyes only for my imperial mistress. If I closed my lids, I could still see her image—the adorable profile, the vibrating torso. If I looked again, she seemed invested with novel charms. For a long while, all that was dream-like, all that was alluring, all that was noble—wood notes and spiritual voices—mixed with the flow of the music; and then there were glimpses of beauty,

soft hands laid on tired eyelids—the touch of lips—the odor of jonquils.

When I awoke, it was two o'clock.

At this point, Walpole got up, and, crossing the room with quick strides, closed my door.

"I beg pardon," said he, "but it made me sick—that girl down-stairs at the piano, mangling my pet Chopin Nocturne. I was saying—when I awoke, it was two o'clock. The fact is, the clock was the first object I saw. The fire in the grate and the lights were burning. The music—of course, the music had ceased; all was very still—like the great quietude of a windless noon. Could I be dreaming yet? No, the dream was over! And the performer—where was she? This was her hiding-place; perhaps—yes—I searched here and there in the music-room and in the lighted parlors; I hoped—you see, it would have been such a cunning piece of comedy if—but no one could be found. Once, as I passed near the 'duchess'—the fatal chair—I heard a sound that made my flesh crawl. For the instant, I failed to recognize my own unconscious laugh at the absolute ridiculousness of my position. At times, even a man grows hysterical. I went into the hall, slipped on my coat, picked up my hat, and left. In the darkness outside, I was possessed with a mad desire to shriek—to thrust my head against the wall. I didn't.

"As soon as I reached the hotel, I had the proprietor pulled out of his bed. When he entered my room, I said: 'Gilfrey, I have just received the intelligence of the death of my uncle; he leaves me a fortune I have been expecting for twenty years. For a day or two, you are to take charge of me; let me have the liquors I want, let me do what I will, break what I choose—understand, I pay all damages. You must deal with me kindly, give me everything I ask for—except the key of the door; as you value your soul, Gilfrey, don't allow me to get out of this room.'

"He promised, and kept his promise," said Walpole, and said no more.

"Come, go on," said I. "You played the mischief, and then sobered up——"

"And left town—that's all."

"But, before you left town, you tried, of course——?"

"Well, yes. When I recovered, I sat down and wrote Miss Corday the most humorous letter I ever composed; no reply came. I wrote, then, the most impassioned love-song in prose that could be conceived; it met with no better fate. Afterward, I presented myself at the house, but not even the bell was answered."

"Very sad, my dear boy," said I.

"You say, it is very sad, yet you laugh."

"Did I laugh? It was like your hysterical laugh—unconscious."

"Tell me, my friend, do you regard the affair as a tragedy or as a farce?"

"A tragedy, if she took you seriously; a farce, if you snored."

"But no woman ever accused me——"

"You do funnier things—here, you had two millions within your grasp, and fell asleep!"

"That's true. I say, don't you think she considered me a blooming, ineffable——?"

"I am afraid so," I said.



FOR FEAR

THE perfect present, I would catch and hold,
And live forever—yea, till Time is done.
Never, O God, to see her lips grow cold!
Never to mark the setting of the sun!

For love has taught me fear. A coward now,
I tremble lest my very fear should bring
A shadow to my lady's gentle brow,
Or some strange silence to the lips that ring.

The future—all the turning of the years—
I'd drown forever in this perfect day,
Lest doubt should come, and anger with hot tears,
To whisper that one god had feet of clay.

THEODORE ROBERTS.



AND COLLECT DAMAGES

HIRAM—Where ye goin' with that blind hoss, an' that ol' ramshackle wagon?
SILAS—I'm goin' up the road a piece, an' see if I can't meet one o' them automobiles.



"SHE will make a hit in society."
"What makes you think so?"
"She has such a great past before her."

GUIDO, THE GONDOLIER

By Clinton Scollard

*O*VER the long lagoon
The orient gold of the moon;
Out of the gardens blown
The rose's spicery,
And the low and languid moan
Of the Adriatic sea!

Night in Venice—night,
With its web of spangled dreams!
The Grand Canal alight
With a myriad lantern-beams;
Music in languorous bars
From a maze of strummed guitars;
Lattices open thrown,
And balconies wreathed with bloom;
Gloom?—not a ghost of gloom
In the queenly island-town
(The sculptured flower of stone
That beauty-lovers praise),
But song borne far adown
Through all of its water-ways!

Song?—aye, strain on strain,
With ever the one refrain!
Love—its glamour and gleam;
Love—the rapture-dream!
And the clearest voice in all
Of the crowded carnival,
The most ecstatic note
On the night-tide set afloat
(Golden ripple and run
Like a heavenly antiphon),
That many hung mute to hear,
Was that of a youth—of one
Guido, the gondolier.

As blithe he was to see
As the lad of the Latmian glen,
The hale Endymion, when
He wooed the queen of the night;
Yet upon no goddess he,
Whose song was without a peer,
Had turned his yearning sight,

THE SMART SET

But the doge's daughter, pure
 As the Maytime of the year;
 And she loved this troubadour,
 Guido, the gondolier.

The moon-smile touches the earth;
 The bird dips out of the air;
 Thus Love, of immortal birth,
 Joineth the high and low,
 Until it is theirs to know
 Bliss or divine despair.
 "The garden water-stair
 At the heart of the carnival night!"
 This was the word that came,
 And fanned his soul to a flame,
 And thither, without a fear,
 Sped, with his oar-sweep light,
 Guido, the gondolier.

One little liquid trill,
 Such as the nightingales spill,
 When the first star burns on the breast
 Of the violet-colored west;
 Then, a face like the sudden bloom
 Of dawn in the scented gloom!
 Afar, from wall to wall,
 Echoed the carnival;
 Song, in a passionate tide,
 Swelled, drooped, but never died;
 "Rejoice!" all Venice cried,
 And the skies gave back, "Rejoice!"
 But a voice men longed to hear
 Was lifted not—his voice—
 Guido, the gondolier.

From out of the byways dim,
 What long and shadowy shape
 Makes sudden swift escape,
 And seems like a gull to swim
 Over the broad lagoon,
 In the radiant flood of the moon?
 A gondola, wherein twain,
 Fain as a flower is fain
 Of the sun, know naught save the bliss
 Of love, and a lover's kiss!
 The doge's daughter dear,
 And her blithesome minstrel-swain,
 Guido, the gondolier.

Why follow them o'er the foam?
 They heeded the world-old call,
 Caught in its wondrous thrall;
 Ravenna, Rimini, Rome?—

Nay, 'tis the Land of Love
 (Ah, the happiness thereof!)
 That is henceforth their home!
 A vision of youth's delight,
 They vanished into the night—
 The night of a bygone year—
 The doge's daughter fair,
 Fearless and debonair,
 And Guido, the gondolier.



HIS SARCASTILOQUACITY

“EVER notice,” began the Old Codger, in his usual grim way, “that, when your head aches, every bore in town seems determined to talk to you; or that music, hair and foolishness generally go hand in hand; or that a little onion is stronger than the biggest pumpkin; or that a widow knows more, and pretends to know less, than any other living creature; or that, as soon as you have paid the fiddler, seven other fiddlers begin to tune up; or that there is no fool like a learned fool; or that some very dignified men look a good deal like overgrown toads?”

“Ever observe that dyed whiskers fool nobody but the party that wears them; or that you never heard a fish lying about the size of the man that caught it; or that very many people spoil their self-sacrifice by acting as if they had a patent on the virtue; or that every now and then an economical housewife kills a near and dear relative by trying to beat the doctor at his own game?”

“Ever think that many a prosperous man owes his success to the advice that he didn't take; or that a young lawyer's brow generally bulges a good deal more than his stomach does? Ever wonder who makes the almanacs; or why the wretch who rocks the boat is, usually, the only one that is saved after the upsetting; or why the title of 'colonel' should make a man's nose red? Ever know a man either to die or pay up, who promised surely to hand you that ten back next Saturday, if he lived? Ever fail to sniff when you saw it spelled, 'S-m-y-t-h-e'? Ever notice how hard most people labor in order to get out of work? Ever try to discover any sufficient reason why the Fool-Killer shouldn't slay all dancing masters? Ever catch a circus man drinking his own lemonade? Ever see a stuttering person that didn't want to talk all the time? Ever get the notion into your head that everybody in Siam must be twins? Ever notice how mannish a little boy is over his first boots, and how childish an old man is about his young wife? And so on, and so forth.

“And, if you've observed, noticed, and taken intelligent cognizance of these and the multitude of other peculiarities, foibles and inconsistencies displayed by other people, in the workings of what, for want of a better name, we generally call human nature, have you ever stopped to think that it is barely possible that our own eccentricities and peccadillos look just as illogical and rectangular to other folks as theirs do to us? And, if so, the moral of all this is that—er—heh!—it is now fourteen minutes to six o'clock, and we are going to have stewed chicken, dumplings, and the minister, for supper, this evening; and I must be there on time, both out of respect for the clergyman, and because I want some of the chicken. Moralizing can be done just as well at odd spells, but time and tide, and, under certain circumstances, chicken stew, wait for no man.”

TOM P. MORGAN.

AFTER A PLAYING OF GRIEG

YOUR music led me by strange ways:
 Past vision's farthest evidence,
 Past the last outpost fact of time,
 Unto the very brink of sense.

It seemed that could I only step
 Across the gulf that yawned between,
 I might discover, once for all,
 What ail the marvels mean;

That I should find the shy Spring's heart,
 And understand each secret bird,
 Should see the Unseen, face to face,
 And speak the withheld word.

Only another step, it seemed,
 And, always, I should understand
 The sisterhood of love and shame,
 Why joy and pain go hand in hand;

Why laughter is akin to tears;
 Why, at the heart of things most sweet,
 Lies a dim sense of some old grief,
 Subtle and exquisite and fleet.

I never guessed how far I fared
 On paths of shadow and delight,
 Till silence mocked me, and I was
 A little child, lost in the night

Of unimagined deeps and heights,
 Encompassed by a mystery—
 To stumble back across the dark
 Into the light of things that be.

ARTHUR KETCHUM.



THE MODERN WAY

“WHAT! Angelina, did you get all those books from the library to read?”
 “Mercy, no, mama—to talk about.”



SOME men who claim they never speak to an inferior, probably never met one.

THE GAY LORD GAYLE

By G. B. Burgin

MISS DALE firmly readjusted her pince-nez. "Directly the train steams into the station, you will prepare, children, to receive his lordship with becoming deference and my 'Song of Welcome.' Sarah Gubbins, how often am I to check you in your disgusting habit of blowing your nose on your pinafore!"

"Please 'um, I dunno," said Sarah, with a broad grin. "I do be so narvous, I be, at zeein' a real lord."

"Control your emotions, Sarah. That is where the advantage of breeding comes in. Do I look excited? Am I other than calm? Am I afraid of meeting a lord?"

"Well, you do zeem a bit flustered, 'um," said the uncompromising Sarah. "I be all of a twitter, I be."

"Ahem!—you are excused for twittering, Sarah. It is the—the natural emotion consequent on receiving his lordship. To-day is a red-letter day for Frobisham. Martha Jones, what is a red-letter day?"

Thus confronted with the unexpected, Martha Jones burst into tears, and was locked up in the lamp-room for so untimely a display of ignorance. Having thus asserted her authority as the vicar's daughter, Miss Dale turned to the school-teacher, lovely Henriette Sewell, and surveyed her with a sniff of displeasure. "Really, Miss Sewell, it is my duty to request you to dress with a little more simplicity. Your hat is—is simply garish. Even I could not wear it."

"No, I'm sure you couldn't. It is suitable for a young girl, dear Miss Dale," retorted the lovely Henriette. "We—we can't all resemble the miss-

ing Duchess of Gainsborough, after going through a cure at Homburg."

The girl spoke with so artless a simplicity that Miss Dale could not imagine she intended to be impertinent. "Very well, I shall overlook it this time, Miss Sewell. Remember, in future, on occasions of this kind, plain holland would be more becoming for a plain school-teacher. It would never do to have you mistaken for me."

"I quite agree with you," retorted Miss Sewell, with a certain amount of crispness. "People ought to be able to recognize a lady when they see her."

"I think, my dear, we are monopolizing the platform," said the vicar, timidly. "The station-master actually seems to think that we are in the way. He says, will I 'hold the service lower down.'"

"Like his impertinence!" snapped Miss Dale. She charged at the station-master. "Have the goodness, Mr. Truelove, to remember that this is a social function, and that you have nothing to do with it except to stop strutting up and down."

"Very well," said the station-master. "It's my duty to 'strut,' but it's all one to me, Miss Dale. We've not had any funerals lately. If you persist in drawing up these children on the platform, you will supply a long-felt want. Some of them are bound to get under the engine."

"Would you argue with me?"

"No, miss, certainly not. Porter, shove those children back against the wall, and get two more men to keep them there. I don't want to be blamed if there's an inquest."

"Do you intend to 'shove' me

against the wall in the same disgraceful way?" Miss Dale's eyes became like those of an excited codfish.

"Certainly not, miss," said the station-master, respectfully. "Get as near the engine as you please. There's nothing to prevent *you* from going."

"I think, my love, he is quite right," ejaculated the vicar. "It would be annoying to have the Sunday-school disintegrated, just when it has attained so remarkable a state of efficiency. Besides, you know what a fuss parents make. Have you seen my glasses? I cannot read the address without my glasses, and it will take three-quarters of an hour."

"It will take just three minutes, father. I am going to read the address. You do mumble so!"

"But really, Lucy!"

Miss Dale swept the vicar back against the wall, as if he, too, were a refractory infant. "So annoying," he murmured, "so annoying, when I had casually mentioned my great discovery of how the Phoenicians got their tin."

Miss Sewell gave him a comforting pat on the back. "Never mind, vicar, dear. I'd be very much obliged to you if you'd discover how I could get some. The loss of it is the cause of all my troubles." She turned hastily away.

The vicar had a dim idea that her lovely eyes were as blue as a Summer sky, her hair like ripening corn, her cheeks a mingling of cream and roses. To look at her comforted him. Her pretty blue-and-white muslin refreshed his tired sight. His eyes wandered from this vision of delightful youth to his own grim daughter, parchment-skinned, thin as a skeleton, stern, unyielding, dressed in a glaring yellow garment that made her bilious to behold. She was forty-two, and looked four thousand. The black feathers in her wide-brimmed hat reminded him of the plumes on a hearse. He could not help thinking that, in becoming the parent of so unprepossessing a woman, he had innocently inflicted a grievous wrong on his fellow-creatures. His fellow-creatures in

Frobisham would have heartily echoed his thoughts, had he put them into words. They, too, had suffered.

"Now, children, when I give the word, and the train comes round the corner, you will burst into melody," said Miss Dale, in a voice like a peahen's preparing for rain.

"Look more inclined to burst into tears, don't they, vicar?" whispered Miss Sewell.

"Ye-es, my dear, I'm afraid I agree with you. Lucy is somewhat unbending with them, and they are afraid of her."

"But I am not," said Miss Sewell. "Vicar, if it were not for your goodness to me, I wouldn't stay here another day. She runs the place."

"Ye-es," said the vicar, regretfully. "All her late mother's somewhat embarrassing firmness, my dear. She almost made me run, too, sometimes. Whenever I wish to do something Lucy doesn't want me to do, it is as if her sainted mother had arisen from the grave. But don't let us talk about it. Hot as it is, the mere recollection makes me shudder."

Puff-puff! Hiss! Whir-r-r! Grunt! Snort! Grunt! The train turned the corner, slowed down, without slaughtering the Sunday-school, and—stopped. A grimy engine-driver looked out of his cab, and nodded to the station-master. "Picnic?" he asked, languidly. "Who's that giddy old yellow butterfly?"

"That's the vicar's daughter. Not much of a picnic for me," said the station-master.

"You're right," said the engine-driver. "She makes my eyes swim." He hurriedly effaced himself.

As Miss Dale waved her yellow-gloved hand, Martha Jones, who had been freed from the lamp-room on her promise not to be so ignorant in future, suddenly became zealous, and burst out with, "In the mur-ry, mur-ry Springtime," quite forgetting the "Song of Welcome," which had been written by Miss Dale, and set to "Home, Sweet Home," for the occasion. The other children forgot, too,

and followed Martha's lead. As it was a blazing June day, the tall, handsome young man who got out of a first-class carriage near the engine, put up his eye-glass somewhat superciliously. "Damn silly, I call it," he murmured, softly; "damn silly! They're evidently getting mixed up about the climate."

Miss Dale fixed a gold-rimmed pince-nez on her eagle nose, and approached the young man, with a capacious smile. "Your lordship will have the goodness not to move until I have read the address," she said, firmly.

"But I——"

"I must insist on your lordship not interrupting. When I have finished, you may move."

"Thanks, awflee," murmured the other, dropping his eye-glass, and catching sight of Miss Sewell, who looked at him, her eyes dilated with contending emotions.

He bowed gracefully to her. "Henriette!" he murmured, joyfully. "So, I've found her, at last! What the dickens is she doing here? And why, in the name of all that's disgraceful, has that jealous old cat thrust her up against the wall?"

"Silence!" commanded Miss Dale. "'We, the unworthy, yet representative, inhabitants of——'"

"Oh, I say," interrupted the young man, "you're——"

"Silence, your lordship! 'We, the unworthy, yet representative, inhabitants of Frob——'"

"Will you have the goodness to inform me where I am to stand?" asked a plaintive voice at Miss Dale's elbow. "Where's the red carpet for me to stand on?"

"How dare you presume to interfere!" Miss Dale withered him at a glance.

The pale young man, with straw-colored hair and quiet garments, dropped his hat in amazement. He had a light shawl in one hand, and a silk handkerchief around his throat. He moved his lips as if sucking a lozenge.

"But I——" Something went wrong with the lozenge; he nearly choked. "There's a whole one wasted," he said, peevishly. "It's down my throat before I've tasted it."

"We, the unworthy, yet representative, inhabitants of Frobisham, welcome your lordship on this momentous occasion of your coming of age, and trust that you will pledge yourself to support those Protestant doctrines for which your ancestors so worthily died——"

"My dear lady," said the plaintive voice at her elbow, "I shall die, too, if you——"

"Then have the goodness to go into the waiting-room, and die there," icily retorted Miss Dale. "Don't you see we're all busy? '—worthily died, and—and——'"

"I'm afraid there's a mistake, my good woman. Will you have the goodness to listen to——?"

"No, sir; I will not! How dare you presume to call me a good woman! Go into the waiting-room if you want to die; it's very comfortable '—and walked firmly to the scaffold.'"

"I shall walk to the carriage," declared the young man with straw-colored hair. "Captain Lorimer, will you have the goodness to tell this tiresome person who I am?"

The handsome young man with the eye-glass bowed gravely. "With pleasure, your lordship. My dear defender of the British, and imperiler of his lordship's, constitution, permit me to have the pleasure of making known to you the gay Lord Gayle, of Gayle Manor. Looks gay, doesn't he?"

"Then, sir, what is the meaning of this subterfuge? Who are you? An impostor?" Miss Dale's pince-nez clanged stormily against her watch-chain.

"I? Oh, I'm only Jack Lorimer, his lordship's guide, philosopher and friend; am I not, Gayle?"

"Captain Lorimer, have the goodness not to be so familiar in—public," said his lordship, primly. "Really, madame!" Seeing that there

was something in her akin to his own ideals, his stern glance at Miss Dale softened. "My dear madame, your mistake is pardonable."

"No, oh, no! it is not, your lordship." Miss Dale made a sweeping curtsey, which nearly took her under the engine. "I can never forgive myself for having mistaken mere animal beauty for the pride of intellect. One has only to behold your lordship in the light of day to see, at once, that you are one of Nature's aristocrats. This person"—she put up her pince-nez again—"is passable; oh, yes, fairly passable. But the type, my lord, the type, is so—so—"

"Confoundedly common, isn't it?" laughed Lorimer. "Any one has only to look at you, Gayle, to see you're 'the daughter of a hundred earls,' or whatever it is."

"I don't follow you, Lorimer," said his lordship, pettishly. "How can I be any one's daughter? Simply foolish, when you know I'm not; simply foolish! Who is responsible for these—these perniciously inadequate arrangements? They're not what I expected—not what I expected."

"I—I am," faltered Miss Dale. "We did not know until yesterday that your lordship would, for the first time in your life, condescend to visit your lordship's estate of Gayle."

"I shouldn't, only he put it into my head." His lordship pointed a minatory finger at Lorimer. "We're going back again to-night. Not even a carpet for me to stand on! not even a Brussels—a cheap Brussels! 'Pon my soul, it's too bad; it really is!"

"I'm—I'm sorry," faltered Miss Dale.

"Well, I suppose it's too late to get a carpet now. Is there a brass band? Surely, there's a brass band!"

"Yes, your lordship, a new trombone."

"And a photographer to take me stepping out on the platform?"

"I—I hadn't thought of that," explained Miss Dale.

"No little girl in pink stockings, with a bouquet of roses?"

"N-no. I—I make a point of our Sabbath-school wearing white—like myself."

"You are excused," said his lordship, in dissatisfied tones, "although, on such an occasion, you ought to have known better. Roses are cheap enough in June. No triumphal arches?"

"Ye-es—one."

"There ought to have been three, with, 'God bless the heir,' on one of them, in red letters. Forgotten to have an ox-roasting on the village green? Yes, of course, you've forgotten. The things you've forgotten would fill a big book. And yet the fields are full of oxen—simply teeming with them. Most important to have an ox. It is so—so typical!"

"No, Gayle, of course there isn't an ox-roasting on the village green," interrupted Lorimer. "You're overdoing the ox. Aren't there enough asses roasting on the platform?"

"Ah, you are unnecessarily familiar, Captain Lorimer. Where's my impromptu speech?" He fumbled in his bag. "Ah, yes! Have the goodness to draw up the children in a semicircle, and bid the young person in blue and white approach nearer."

"Here, I say!" savagely cried Lorimer.

"Bid the young person in blue and white approach nearer. She is passing comely," said his lordship, firmly; "also, the nervous-looking patriarch in the smock frock. Bring him quite close, and then that absurd pitchfork he is flourishing will not poke my eyes out. Hem! 'My people, although I have only just returned from the grand tour, I have watched over you from afar, have followed your happy agricultural pursuits with the eye of a—eye of a—' There's a confounded blot here, Captain Lorimer. With what kind of eye have I followed their happy agricultural pursuits? Take that man's pitchfork away from him, or I sha'n't have an eye of any sort to follow anybody."

"Eye of a father," suggested Lorimer, with another glance at the "young person in blue and white."

"'Eye of a father.' Yes, that's it. 'In the lonely watches of the night, as I crossed the Channel, and sat looking at the white cliffs of Albion, torn with conflicting emotions——'"

"If I remember aright, *you* were 'torn with conflicting emotions,' not the cliffs. We'll consider the rest of it as read," haughtily interrupted Captain Lorimer. "You really oughtn't to talk like that before ladies. Every one knows what a Channel passage is like, even in June. Take Miss Dale to the carriage. I will follow in the next one with the vicar, and the—the young lady in blue and white."

Miss Dale flew to his lordship's arm, and clung to it with joyous girlishness. Then, she turned severely to Captain Lorimer. "The young person in charge of the children will see them back to the village. You need not trouble about her."

"With his lordship's permission, she'll do nothing of the sort," said the insufferable Lorimer. "Station-master, here's a sov for you, if you'll see the children safely out of the station. I'll send you a cheque for their buns and ginger beer. Now, Gayle, off with you to the carriage."

Gayle meekly took Miss Dale to the carriage. It had four bay horses with white rosettes. "So—so like a wedding!" said Miss Dale, as she got in. "Dare I trust myself with such a—such a Polyphemus as your lordship?"

"Of course, you can," said his lordship, looking longingly back at Henriette.

When they were out of the station, Lorimer came up to Miss Sewell. "Henriette," he said, humbly, "why, when your father smashed up, did you go away without letting me know where to find you? May I have the honor of escorting you to Gayle?"

Henriette faltered, took the vicar's arm, and turned away.

"My dear, I will look after the children. I do not feel equal to consoling bereaved parents this weather,"

said the vicar, perspiring in glossy broadcloth; and Henriette, with a smile, put her dainty finger-tips on the young man's arm.

"Miss Dale will never forgive me for this," she murmured. "Did you see the cold fury of her eye?"

"It was the only cold thing about her," said Lorimer; "the rest of her was red-hot."

"Buzz-buzz! Boom-boom!" The trombone began its fell work. "I—I can explain everything," added Lorimer, handing her into the open carriage.

"Come to me at the vicarage, tomorrow, Sewell," said Miss Dale, "with the school accounts and your written resignation."

"May I come also, Miss Dale?" inquired Lorimer. "With your assistance, it will be so easy to study the antiquities of the place."

"Captain Lorimer," said his lordship, sternly, "the procession is waiting." He looked at his notes. "There ought to have been white-clad village maidens to sing to me as I came out of the station. Why aren't there white-clad village maidens to sing to me, Miss Dale?"

"I—I will sing to your lordship," said Miss Dale.

"But you're in yellow," retorted his lordship, again referring to his notes.

"It makes no difference. I repeat that I shall have the pleasure of singing to your lordship."

"Not till after luncheon," said his lordship, with more decision than he had hitherto shown. "Tell that trombone man to play, 'See, the Conquering Hero Comes,' and we'll start."

"Your lordship is evidently accustomed to conquer," simpered Miss Dale, with a meaning glance.

"Drive on," cried his lordship, harshly; "drive on. My throat's like a limekiln."

II

WHEN the procession halted in front of the grim old halls of Gayle, Miss Dale surveyed the ancestral pea-fowl

on the ancient terraces with great satisfaction, as they unfolded the gold-green glories of their tails. She spread her own yellow skirt as far as possible, and regretted that she had not had it made longer. "Ah," she said to his lordship, "does not your heart throb at the sight of yonder time-worn battlements?"

"They do look a bit moldy, don't they?" queried his lordship. He turned away his head.

Miss Dale laid a sympathizing hand on his arm. "Ah, do not mind me. I can understand the emotion which fills your manly—er—breast at the sight. Here, your fathers have fought and died; here, when the wild winds of Winter howled and skirled about the ancient walls, they sat in the gloaming, harp in hand, and sang their prowess on the battle-field; here, they have——"

"Had their luncheon; at least, I hope so," said his lordship. "I want mine badly, badly! Introduce the blue-and-white girl that Lorimer is keeping all to himself; I want to know her."

With the worst possible grace, Miss Dale complied. "I suppose you mean to take her in to luncheon, Lorimer," said his lordship, testily. "You go first."

"But, surely, that will be most unbecoming," acidly suggested Miss Dale. "My natural precedence, too—what is to become of that?"

"I want to know what will become of all of us," said his lordship, "if we don't get any luncheon. Most annoying! We're due back in town to-night."

"To-night! I had hoped that your lordship had found a rest for the sole of your wandering foot."

His lordship was evidently growing cross. "Take me for a dove with an olive branch? Do I look as if I had any olive branches? G—I mean Lorimer—knows I must have my luncheon at two, or I'm done for."

"Here it is," said Lorimer, cheerfully, although he also seemed rather ill at ease. "A rattling good one, too!

I wired on ahead not to spare expense. Come along, Gayle."

"That's right; that's right. Now, we'll make up for the dusty journey." His lordship scuttled to the table, dragging Miss Dale with him, at a most undignified rate.

"But," protested Miss Dale, "why aren't we sitting at the head of the table?"

"Oh, that's Lorimer's place," retorted his lordship. "Try this mayonnaise."

"His place! I don't understand."

"Oh"—his lordship's mouth was most unbecomingly full—"oh, yes, his place. You see, I humor him."

"But I don't see. Hu——!"

"Yes, of course. Humor him. He's an obstinate beggar, when he's roused. Try this champagne; looks good."

Miss Dale's champagne nearly choked her. "Don't cough it all up again. Very good brand," said his lordship. "Butler, give me summere."

"But—I—want—to—know—why—that—girl—sits—at—the—head—of—the—table," articulated Miss Dale, with great distinctness.

"Oh, ask Lorimer; he knows. Butler, summere champagne. Try this chicken; not half bad."

"I—will—not—try—this—chicken—until—I—know," repeated Miss Dale, with great firmness. Then, she grew excited. "Why doesn't your lordship assert yourself? Look at your ancestors!"

"Can't; too short-sighted," said his lordship, his mouth full again. "Butler, summere champagne."

"Oh, my lord, do not look upon the wine cup——"

"Cup! 'Tisn't cup. You don't think I'd waste a thirst like this on cup! But——"

"No, butler; no," said Miss Dale, with precision. "His lordship has had enough champagne."

"Nonsense!" snapped his lordship. "Butler, summere champagne. Tell them to bring me a little *foie gras*, with cayenne on it."

"This—this is dreadful! Can nothing be done to save you?" asked Miss

Dale. "Shall I fetch my father from the other end of the table?"

"Certainly not." His lordship looked at her in surprise. "Thought we were getting on capitally. You're—you're a most interesting woman. Haven't seen any one like you since we were at the Pyramids."

"Your lordship flatters me."

"Oh, no, I don't; impossible. I like you, 'pon my word. You're—you're so majestic."

"Praise from Cæsar is praise, indeed; but the—the champagne! Oh, my lord, the champagne!"

"Never take more than six glasses," said his lordship, cheerfully; "and my name isn't Cæsar. When I got out of the carriage at the station, you were the first person I noticed. Thought you were a—a kind of human sunflower; 'pon my word, I did. Butler, sum——"

"No, my lord; no. You've had five glasses, already."

"Always take six," his lordship again declared; "always take six—at luncheon. Ah! I'm better now. What were we talking about?"

"A-a-bout sunflowers."

"Oh, yes; so we were. Which kind do you like best?"

"Perennials, I think."

His lordship put down his knife and fork, and surveyed her, critically. "Remarkable! So do I. Will you be my—my perennial sunflower?"

"You—you take my breath away!"

"You wanted to take my champagne away, so it's only fair."

"And we should live here, I as Lady Bountiful, you as lord of the manor, and——"

"Oh, no, we shouldn't, unless Lorimer asks us down. We'd live at——"

Lorimer, with a whispered apology to Miss Sewell, hastily came around to his lordship, and explained something. "By Jove!" said the latter, "who'd have thought it! I ought to have guessed what was up. You never even looked at a girl all the time we were away. Butler, summere champagne."

Miss Dale made a mental note that she would look after that butler when

she reigned at Gayle. "Perhaps, we had better call papa up, and ask his permission. Do you think he will consent to part from me?"

"Consent! Of course, he'll consent. You'll be just the very person to look after my charities and schools and things. You take that department. I'm going in for politics."

"But shouldn't we live here?"

"Why, of course not; Lorimer will want to. But he's hammering on the table. Where are my notes? Oh, here they are. I've got to explain things."

He rose, and looked around at the assembled guests and tenants, who were all wondering why he did not sit at the head of his own table.

"My people," he began. "At least, you're not my people, but Lorimer's people, and——"

"Oh, drop that, there's a good fellow," said Lorimer. "Just explain who I really am."

"Of course, I will, old fellow," said the gay Lord Gayle. "The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, I'm not the gay Lord Gayle at all. The real lord is sitting there at the head of his own table. He took the name of Lorimer when we were traveling together, because he wanted to be quiet."

It was as if a bombshell had burst. Miss Dale sprang to her feet. "Impostor! You have wooed me under false pretenses."

"Then, you won't be my perennial sunflower?" asked the "Impostor," with unabated good humor.

"Certainly not. I decline to be any sort of flower to you."

"Sorry," said the "Impostor." "Then, we'll consider it off. You won't get such a chance again in a hurry. Where was I, Jack?"

"Oh, get it over," smiled the real host.

"The fact is, ladies and gentlemen," explained the "Impostor," "I'm coming of age next month, and I wanted to get my hand in and see how it was done; so, I asked Gayle to let me take his place, just for practice, and he very good-humoredly consented."

"Well, I'm dommed!" said a burly farmer.

"Not already, I hope," said the "Impostor." "That's all, ladies and gentlemen. You'd really got hold of the right man, until I crept out of the carriage lower down. I was late and nearly missed the express; so, of course, we couldn't travel together."

Gayle sprang to his feet. "Ladies and gentlemen, I have to apologize to you, and to ask your forgiveness. I am sure the ladies will accord it to me most willingly, when I tell them that I had met with a disappointment in love, and did not care what I did. I was engaged to a very beautiful young lady, whose father came to grief, and she disappeared, leaving a letter to say that she was too poor to marry me, and that I was to consider myself a free man. Of course, I couldn't, you know, and, I don't mind telling you, I've been very unhappy about it."

The ladies looked at him, with renewed interest. He was certainly the handsomest man in the room. The "Impostor," on the other hand, looked the most insignificant.

Why did the "blue-and-white girl" seem so happy? A sickening sensation stole over Miss Dale. Could it—? Was it—? It was! The speaker's next sentence clinched the matter.

"But," said the radiant orator, "I found her again to-day, waiting to welcome me on Frobisham platform. At first, she declined to have anything to do with me, on the ground that she was a simple village maiden——"

"Simple!" The interruption came from Miss Dale.

"—simple village maiden, and that I was a 'lord of Burleigh town,' and all that kind of thing, you know. But I have persuaded her to change her mind, and we intend to live here for six months in the year. Allow me to have the very great happiness of presenting to you the future Lady Gayle."

He took the "blue-and-white girl" by the hand. Her eyes were brimming with happy tears. She smiled upon them, then turned to smile at him, and put both her hands in his.

A shout went up to the oaken rafters. "The future Lady Gayle! The future Lady Gayle!"

"Here, you, butler!—my eighth," said the "Impostor," and held out his glass for more champagne.

The butler filled it, with reluctance. "Ain't no style with him," he confided to a footman, as he retreated to the sideboard.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, as you have so kindly forgiven my misdeeds," said the gay Lord Gayle, "I must ask you also to forgive, and drink to the health of, my old college chum and dearest friend, the Earl of Hexham."

"Wha-at!" shrieked Miss Dale. Then, she collected herself. "Forgive my harshness," she said, tenderly, to the earl.

The earl looked at his notes. "Oh, no; that's off," he said, cheerfully. "Told you, you wouldn't get such a chance again in a hurry."

And she didn't.



A SATISFIED LOVER

THE man in love with self will need
To have no doubt of love's survival;
He ne'er on jealousy will feed,
Nor have a fear of any rival;
And, of all lovers, you'll agree,
He is most famed for constancy!

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.

THE ILLUMINATING HOUR

By Emery Pottle

THERE is a pleasant belief, current among those who consider heaven to have raised them up as interpreters of our dreams, that simplicity in the marriage ceremonial and an inexpensive trousseau are undeniable marks of perfect love-matches. The truth of this belief, like that of most other questions of any moment, has never been satisfactorily determined.

"Weddings, my dear Lucy, like twins, are entirely a matter of taste—and quite as likely to happen unexpectedly."

"Good taste, that's it—that's what I am always crying for in people." Lucy Wilson took up the words of Penfield Wilkins, and underscored them by confident raps of her parasol on the tops of the pews. "There is a chance, Penfield"—and she spoke as one having the authority of experience in both directions—"there is a chance for good taste in everything."

"Oh, yes, Lucy, and one takes such terrible chances, nowadays," responded Wilkins, casting his eye, reminiscently, toward the palm-bedecked altar.

Observing that, as generally happens, she had failed to point a moral, but still willing to adorn a tale, Lucy laughed, and continued:

"After all, discretion is the better part of good taste; and, my dear, how little of it there is!—discretion, I mean. In the important events of birth and death, and in that stupendous affair on which the one ought to, and I'm not sure the other doesn't, largely depend—marriage, I refer to—in that, Pen, I rarely see discretion displayed; valor, I grant you, but no discretion."

"Which, I take it, dear Lucy, is only your delicate way of setting forth your opinion that your Creator is a being of doubtful taste—if we may believe that the making of marriages is the avocation of heaven."

To this remark, Miss Wilson did not reply. She does not like to discuss her attitude toward Providence, when she is conscious of the perfection of a new gown, and on the way to luncheon at Sherry's.

The little chapel, on a quiet side-street, wherein John Holland and Sophie Fairwood had been married in simple fashion but a half-hour ago, was nearly deserted. A few people lingered in desultory knots, talking, as were Penfield Wilkins and Lucy Wilson, on the hazards of conjugal union, and the probabilities of making the course with a tolerable score. The solemnity of the marriage service is so affecting that it induces a philosophic current in the conversation which follows its close; with the single, it appears in a marked respect for the holy institution, mingled with a sense of unworthiness and of an inability to live up to the sonorous requirements thereof; while, with the married, after an agreeable period of realization that it is over for them, and that they have come through it no worse than they have, the strongest feeling is a desire to change the wording of the ritual.

At the door of the church, Lucy Wilson and Penfield paused for a moment. She reverted to her earlier theme, and spoke with decision.

"In good taste, I call the affair—yes, considering the circumstances—

yes—though I can't decently call it a pretty wedding."

"My good Lucy, you are quite in error," he said, looking at her with slow amusement; "quite in error regarding the affair you have been attending. It was not a wedding; it was a marriage."

"Oh, if it has come to splitting hairs," impatiently. "But what I should like to have explained to me is the real situation between Holland and Elizabeth Higginson. They say the general worships her, by the way. No one seems to know the whole truth; yet, if half I hear is true, I should think she would blush to be seen here to-day, and if——"

"Hush! she's coming this way now," Wilkins said, quickly.

"Oh, Mrs. Higginson," smiled Lucy. "I'm glad to see you. Penfield and I have been having the most delightful visit together—we see each other so little this Spring that, when we meet, we simply fly into each other's arms. How do you do? And how is the general? Dear man! we had such a pleasant luncheon together, only the other day. I'm coming soon to see you. Wasn't the wedding pretty? I'm so fond of Holland——"

Mrs. Higginson's polite, but vague, responses were lost on Miss Wilson, for, at that moment, she descried her cab at the curb, and hastened away—a fluttering, swelling mass of black chiffons and trailing black laces. "Good-bye," she waved, effectively. "I'm always leaving just as you come, am I not? Don't forget our little tea, Pen."

In the cab, she reflected with complacency that she had managed the situation remarkably well, and in perfect taste.

Inconsistency is the immediate jewel of society.

"You will lunch with me to-day, won't you, Pen?" Elizabeth Higginson had said, as they waited for her carriage. "You know we have been back from Berlin two months, and you have called but once. Like Lucy

Wilson, I see nothing of you this Spring—and we used— Well, be nice and come along; the general won't be there."

Wilkins had hesitated, then had yielded, with an appearance of great good humor.

"I am finding new friends with old faces to-day," he said, as they drove up the Avenue.

Now, they were sitting at coffee in General Higginson's imposing dining-room, so imposing that it seemed a pity the humble origin of his father's birth prevented its being ancestral. The cloth had been removed from the table—made congenially small—and the polished surface of the mahogany seemed not unlike a symbol of the hard, glittering relations that had existed between them during the meal.

They had talked of the commonplace in an affectation of gaiety; they had touched on this man or that woman with a wit, the readier and the more stinging that they were using it to amuse each other; to keep from talking, they had talked the more; and to hide, they had recklessly uncovered. And, now, there had come the lull that follows dessert—with friends, the invitingly confidential moment of pushing back the chairs, the settling of garments, and the implied question, "And now, how is it with you?"

Elizabeth pushed a gold cigarette-box toward Wilkins. "Take one—I am going to."

"Like old times," he smiled.

They sat in the silence that shapes itself slowly to speech. The blue smoke from the cigarettes curled lazily about them, and, in the half-light of the room, they seemed, with their thoughts, to be slipping into a realm where space and possessions are forgotten, and men dare to tell the truth.

"Well, Penfield?"

"Well, Elizabeth?"

"Of what are you thinking?"

"Of the Trinity."

"Ecclesiastically speaking?"

"No—at least, I think not—Birth, Marriage and Death."

"Whose?" She bent her head, and, half-insolently, looked at Penfield through narrowed eyes. Of late, Elizabeth's gaze had lost a firm, frank quality.

He sat up, stiffly, in his chair. With the motion, the flexible carelessness of his humor slipped from him. The smile, that he was wont to keep curling about his mouth, hardened into long, uncompromising lines. The gay insouciance of his features faded to extreme plainness.

"Yours and mine," he answered, coldly.

"From Zero to Infinity," she continued, jeeringly, "with a stop at the questionable resort of Conjugal Felicity—you fare far, my friend, for a Spring journey."

Elizabeth leaned her brown head against the massive, carved back of her chair; the long, supple lines of her figure, in the gown of heavy, yellowish-white lace, relaxed, suddenly, into weakness. She giggled, but there was a false note in the sound.

"I don't please you to-day, *n'est-ce pas*, Penfield?"

Wilkins looked at her, in grave silence.

"I hoped you would find me more interesting after marriage—safer, perhaps, being under military discipline, but still worth your while, my—child—do they ever—does Lucy ever call you the Child, now? Is marriage the one unforgivable sin? What is the matter? Has the virtue—the one men monogamously spell with a big V—gone out of me? Has—?"

"Elizabeth!" Wilkins's voice was pleading; there was a foolish moisture in his eyes. "Elizabeth!"

The unfinished words died on her lips. She shrank into her chair, pushing the unmanageable masses of fine, brown hair from her face. Somewhere, a clock chimed two.

"I'm very silly—and to an old and dear friend," she said, quite simply.

"I read once in a book"—as Wilkins talked, his eyes were fixed, soberly, on

the trivial point of lengthening ash on his cigarette—"of a man who went into a far country, and spent his inheritance. After that, he ate husks with—well, with those who really enjoyed that kind of food. One day, he had an illuminating hour—things seemed rather clear to him—he went home—and, as I remember it, his father was glad to see him."

"Ah, yes, I remember, Penfield. He went home. But, if he had had no home—no place to go—if his father had not received him—then?"

He did not answer immediately, and she did not wait for his words.

"It is easy to speak in parables—after the husks have been eaten. Why did you not tell me this pretty tale some time ago?"

Wilkins's face flushed, and he dropped his eyes.

"I was spending—and husk-eating, too, Elizabeth—I could not tell you, then.

"For an hour, Elizabeth," he hurried on, "for an hour, let us bare ourselves to the light. We have lived carelessly, uncaringly—let us not be afraid of the truth. No, let me go on—now that I have begun.

"Elizabeth—I—you must have known—ah, you did know—I see it in your eyes—you saw that I cared for you. That night we rode together in the Park—ages ago—I loved you, then. You have thought me young—with false youth; you have thought me worldly—with false worldliness, and I have been trying to save myself for myself, by covering the truth with a pose of truth. You did not love me, then—how could you?—but I attracted you, and the little game—well, it was fascinating to you. You did not wish me to think that you were cruel and heartless; you did not wish yourself to know you were. So, you did not let me speak, nor did you even admit to yourself that I wished to speak of love. I can talk of it now, calmly enough. Judicial calm is our best stage-property, nowadays. We can analyze and re-analyze the results till nothing is left, save a

thin, white precipitate of our emotion. But, oh, I did care for you! You believe it. Yes?"

She bowed her head, in sober assent.

"And, then, you told me of John Holland and your engagement to him. I was glad of it—glad for his sake and yours—but, oh, how it hurt! I went away to South Africa—and came back—one must come back; but—ah, Elizabeth, it was no prodigal's return! I found the hateful husks here before you, and you eating them. Do you remember that day in the Park, after I had returned, when you told me that—that—you were not going to marry Holland—that you were too sophisticated—too afraid of poverty?"

She interrupted, sharply.

"Then was the time for your parables. Why—why didn't you tell me then that I was in a far country?"

"Elizabeth, what could I speak? Could I make love to you then, when I was but your friend? Could I tell you that you were not right to give up a man, because you were afraid to be poor with him? God, I tried to tell you! I tried to help you, but I could not find the words. And I, too, have not seen clearly, until now. Since I have been here in your house, with you before me—and you have changed, Elizabeth—a curious light has flashed into my mind; things that I saw darkly have come into true perspective, and—ah, I am ashamed—ashamed—so to have failed before to read myself aright. I thought I knew the world, but I knew only the fringe of it, wherein we have been living our silly ways—the make-believe, trivial fringe. We have keen sense of humor, and we laugh at it. Yet, how this fringe molds us, turns us, and perhaps—so great a thing as that might happen—laughs at us, in turn!"

He paused, and looked appealingly, apologetically, across to Elizabeth. She gave no sign of understanding.

It vexed Wilkins. Sermons to stones are barren of satisfaction. He continued, impatiently: "You never cared for John Holland, I believe.

You never really loved him. Caring is not petty arguing as to whether or not a woman can stand heat, or cold, or bad plumbing, or a boarding-house, with a man. It's life, and without it, death—it's too big to argue—it only *wants* and cries out to be heard—it knows no poverty or riches—ah, you didn't really care, you didn't really—"

"Stop! You shall not speak to me like that. If that is to be said, I shall say it, and I alone." Elizabeth rose and came to his side of the table, leaning heavily upon it.

"No one shall uncover my graves but myself. You say this hour has been to you the illuminating hour. It is that to me. I know that I played a game with you, but I dared not admit—I never have until this moment admitted it—and it hurts me now, bitterly, to feel that truth. You say, complacently, I did not care for John—oh, you silly boy!—who knows a woman's heart like herself?—and even if she fails to read it as she sometimes thinks her God reads it. Oh, I thought I did not love him completely, I believed I did not. I care, said I, but I do not care enough to trust myself to his poverty. My pearls were in my hands, I flung them away. I saw the Great Real Thing, and shut my eyes to it, saying that I had become too selfish to see it in its beauty." She leaned over him, defiantly. "I thought all this, I believed it—until this very morning, when I went to his wedding." Her fingers fumbled, impatiently, with the fastenings of her corsage. "There! Listen!—the letter he sent me the morning before he went away from me, forever:

"... I know you do not care and perhaps never cared. I gave you the love of my unspoiled heart, forgetting the great difference between us. That which you took from me can never come back. That which I may give to another woman, who, perhaps, will be my wife some day, is the trust, the fidelity, the respect, which are but the crust from the loaf I had offered you. There is nothing of reproach—"

"Oh, I can't read more!" She choked

back a sob. "With this letter against my heart, I went to his wedding, fighting with myself, laughing at the spectacle of my caring for him, after all that had happened. I went there with the best in me praying that John Holland loved Sophie Fairwood as truly as I believe he loved me. But the worst in me cried out against it. I looked, shamelessly, to find one evidence that he did not care for her—I hope he does not. I hope he never will; I— Oh, what am I saying? John, forgive me! My God! Pen, in that service, I knew that I had lost the pearl of great price. Love him? love him? I love him better than life—why not say it? Poverty! rags!—my friend, I feel that I could give my soul for a day as his wife."

Wilkins bowed his head in his hands. She spoke truly, he knew. The hour of illumination is a terrible moment. And, more terrible than all, the longing she uttered was the cry of his own heart for her. Keener and more bitter than he thought had come the light—the sun into the darkened room of ghosts. With all the strength of his mind and soul, he, Penfield Wilkins, loved her—*now*.

Elizabeth Higginson stood beside him, straight, rigid, with her hands clasped tightly before her, her eyes burning into him. Suddenly, she snatched his hands from his face, with

a little, inarticulate cry. She saw the tears on his cheeks, the helpless, naked, fearful hunger in his eyes.

She read the truth.

"*You! you, too!*" she said, very softly, with the bruising voice of pity.

There was no other word. Silently, they waited for the inevitable event to happen which should set them free.

Again the clock struck—three.

Penfield Wilkins rose. "I realize, for the first time, the inconvenience that a prodigal must meet when he returns to find home—er—fully occupied."

Elizabeth replied, evenly—almost with hardness.

"If he has money, he can take lodgings—or he can sell himself into service again."

He seemed about to speak in answer.

"The hour is over," she broke in.

"Forever?"

"I must live as I have chosen," she answered, indifferently.

A servant entered, discreetly.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Higginson, the general is in the library, and asks that you and the gentleman will join him for coffee and a liqueur. He has just come in, and is not feeling well."

"You may say that I shall come in a moment," answered Mrs. Higginson.



HIS STATUS

"MAWNEY is a pretty useless sort of a chap, isn't he?"

"Well, frankly, I don't see how he could be utilized to any advantage unless his head were taken off, put on a stick, and used as a rattle-box to amuse the children."



A VAIN man always thinks he was created to make some woman very happy. A vain woman thinks her mission is to make many men very—miserable.

A SUGGESTED REFORM

WHY innocent and modest girls
 By chaperons should guarded be,
 When introduced to Fashion's whirls
 As débutantes, I cannot see.
 My observation's been that less
 Glass walls would shattered be by stones,
 And fewer scandals hearts distress,
 If married folk had chaperons.

I fancy great would be the change
 In social circles far and near,
 And less of actions wondrous strange
 From gossips' tongues would reach our ear;
 I firm believe that hushed would be
 The tongue that Mrs. Grundy owns,
 If guileless girls could wander free,
 And married folk had chaperons.

Of course, there'd wailing be and woe—
 All innovations thus are cursed—
 But it is quite deserving, so
 The scheme should prosper from the first.
 The skeletons in closets weird
 Might hush the rattling of their bones,
 Divorce courts get their dockets cleared,
 If married folk had chaperons!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



THE IDEA!

JUDGE—In what did your husband's cruel treatment of you consist?
 PLAINTIFF—He used to wake me up out of a sound sleep, just to tell me I
 was snoring.



SQUEEZED

JAGGLES—Did that noted specialist relieve him?
 WAGGLES—Yes; he relieved him of nearly all he had.

SOME VERY PRIVATE THEATRICALS

By Elizabeth Coolidge

“SO, all my beautifully arranged plans are to go for nothing, and all on account of the vanity of one stupid man!”

“Who?” asked Tom. “Name the villain.”

“Why, Mr. Mortimer.”

“I don’t know what he has to be vain about.”

“Well, then, call it his selfishness, if you wish. He thinks that, if his wife should turn out to be as clever as she is beautiful, he will come to be known only as ‘the husband of the beautiful Mrs. Mortimer.’ So he does not wish her to take part in my private theatricals, where she is sure to make a hit.”

“But suppose she cannot act?”

“She is a born actress,” I said, confidently.

Tom and I were sitting in the curtained alcove at the lower end of the big music-room. At this moment, enter, through right upper entrance, the very lady of whom we were speaking, Mrs. Mortimer, looking, as usual, unconsciously beautiful in the subdued light of a favorable middle distance, and remarkably unconscious, I thought, considering that my cousin Jack had his right arm around her waist, and was apparently uttering soft nothings in her ear. What he said to her, of course, I could not hear, nor what, if anything, she said in reply; but, if looks have any meaning, they were evidently not discussing the tariff or Professor Hyslop’s views on the subjective mind. I inferred this from the fact that presently his left arm had gone to meet its mate. He was clasping her to his bosom; her head, from being haughtily held back, drooped slowly forward, and—after all,

they may have been discussing the tariff or Professor Hyslop; but, if so, they must have been holding earnest argument, for their heads were almost too close for calm, philosophical debate.

In my eagerness not to listen—for eavesdropping is something of which no lady would be guilty, except in a novel, and there only because she “could not avoid overhearing”—my tortoise-shell lorgnette fell to the floor, and broke. I feared, for an instant, that they had heard. Tom, who also is the soul of honor, but not a fanatic, had been listening with all his ears, and now glared at me, reproachfully. But no—the question before the house still appeared to hold the floor. Suddenly, my lady drew herself back, with a girlish, unaffected laugh, exclaiming:

“Oh, Captain Rawley, this won’t do at all! We couldn’t be heard ten feet away, and the business would be laughable unless the lines were clearly heard all over the house.”

“Oh, let us give it one more trial,” said the captain.

“Let us begin at the beginning, then,” said she. “We come in together; I don’t think you ought to have your arm around me then. Wait till after I speak my little piece about leaving the old homestead and my aged grandsire. You are holding my hand, and I say—but let us go through it all.”

Here they retired together, but in a moment they returned, Jack looking rather less happy and more conscious, but Mrs. Mortimer as self-poised as ever. This time, her voice did not lack carrying power; but that’s the best I can say of it. Amateurish is a meek

adjective to express it. If naturalness were the most vicious of faults, and spontaneity a mortal sin against art, she could not have shunned both more completely. In her misdirected zeal to recite, she tore off every shred of simplicity from word and gesture, and stood revealed, a perfect Godiva of the artificial. On she went, in her hopeless, school-girl singsong, running her words together here, ruthlessly sundering them there.

"No, Sir William. Ask me not to do it. To fly with you would be to break my aged grandsire's heart, and bring his grave hairs in sorrow to the gray. The memory of my mother stands between—" But here the aspiring artiste was rudely interrupted by a burst of laughter.

"Oh, cut it out, Muriel! Tackle something in your own class—'Mary Had a Little Lamb,' or *Lady Macbeth* in the sleep-walking scene. The captain looks as if he could play the candle-stick."

It was Mr. Mortimer, in his peculiar vein of badinage, light and airy as a pile-driver.

Mrs. Mortimer spoke sharply, and with a noticeable tremor in her voice:

"Have you been listening all this while?" she asked.

"Lord, no! You give me credit for too much endurance. I only just heard the declamation class, and dropped in like a sort of district-school inspector. Don't mind me, Muriel, and don't mind my criticism. I don't know any more about acting than Tom Wallace does about dancing, and I suppose I'm as big an ass as he is, when I attempt it."

Here, Muriel was unaccountably embarrassed, and tried to put her hand upon her lord's mouth. But Tom, who is *my* lord, and has a keen sense of humor, laughed outright, whereat the stately Muriel strode across the room, and drew back the portière, with a look of mingled surprise and indignation.

"I beg your pardon," she said, with elaborate politeness. "I did not know we had so large an audience for our poor rehearsal."

I did not think of the proper rejoinder on the spur of the moment. I have not thought of it yet. The brightest repartee is that which we never utter.

"One on you," said Mr. Mortimer, with his wonted delicacy; whereat Tom looked sheepish, and I felt as Tom looked. That inimitable woman saved the situation. Dismissing her momentary indignation, she turned her large, soulful eyes on her husband, and pleaded:

"Was it so very, *very* bad, dear?"

"Awful!" responded that truthful spouse, sententiously. She turned to me.

"And you, Mrs. Wallace—did you find it so very awful, too?"

I answered, truthfully: "If I am any judge, Mrs. Mortimer, you are a very fine actress."

"It is so sweet of you to say so, dear, but I should be satisfied to be called a promising amateur."

With that, she took her husband's arm, and made a most effective exit.

Captain Rawley, who had been looking rather silly, and then rather perplexed, now appeared wholly uncomfortable, and sauntered out by another door than that taken by Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer. He seemed to be "trying to think," Tom said. As he went out, Tom turned to me.

"Isn't she a beauty, though? But why did you tell such a whopper? Her acting was simply atrocious, and you know it."

"I don't tell 'whoppers,' as you delicately call them. Part of her acting seemed poor, I admit, beautifully so, but the whole was perfect."

"I'm hanged if I understand you," said Tom; "but I don't think she's likely to cut out Bernhardt or Duse in her chosen rôle, whatever it is, from the sample she has just given us. By the way, what is the play? I'd like to look over the lines."

"The play? I'm sure I don't know."

"Why, didn't you choose it for rehearsal?"

"Not this one," I said.

"Well, where did she get it, then?"

"I don't know. In fact, I rather think she improvised those lines. In that rôle, I fancy, she is as clever as she is at acting—once she gets her inspiration."

"Well, where did she get it, then?" asked Tom; "from that slow captain?"

"No, love," I rejoined, sweetly. Tom usually takes the hint, and abandons the argument, when I have recourse to endearments. "No, love," I repeated. "If the brilliant captain doesn't expire till he has inspired anything or anybody, he will live forever. Mrs. Mortimer likes him, I verily believe, because he is her opposite; she has brains."

"Precisely the reason why I—" began Tom, "I mean why you—oh, hang it! you *know* what I mean, don't you, Polly?"

I didn't. I'm only mortal; but Tom's essays at compliments always delight

me. A primitive Anglo-Saxon, aided by a knotted club, would have wooed his lady-love almost as adroitly. So, I explained.

"It was from my tortoise-shell lorgnette that Mrs. Mortimer drew her inspiration," I said; whereat Tom looked blank. "I mean, when they fell;" whereat he looked blanker.

"I mean, when she *heard* them fall, and knew that somebody must have heard her. Oh, Tom, if a brick block were to fall on *you*, do you think it would inspire you?" Here, Tom laughed good-humoredly, and said:

"Well, never mind, dear girl; if Mrs. Mortimer is a raving beauty and uncommonly clever, you're pretty and bright enough for me, and that's the main thing. I don't want any goddesses, thank you, and I don't envy old Mortimer. Some husbands are almighty stupid, don't you think so?"

I told him that I did.

I certainly do.



GHOSTS

ONE murdered, on the highway, his best friend;
Then, in the ashes of repentance, sought
Comfort, and found it; lo! his hard-won peace
Laid the poor ghost, and God's forgiveness wrought.

Another, in the mart's untoward ways,
Strangled the self his early manhood knew;
That self of honest brow, untroubled eyes,
For gain of gold alone, he darkly slew.

Then, daily, sat a dread ghost at his feast,
Staring upon him with hard, alien eyes!
In fear, he left his palace, seeking far
That peace which is the heart's supremest prize.

But, through long years, there stood beside him still
That shade reproachful, whose chill laughter sent
Terror and fear through him, what time it cried:
"Fool! who slays me seeks vainly to repent!"

CLINTON DANGERFIELD.

THE RIVALS

LONG hours, the Ocean murmured to the Land;
 Came boldly wooing from afar, and beat
 In broken water-words upon the sand,
 The music of a passion passing sweet.

Long hours, the Land sent back her low replies,
 With bosom bared to meet her love's caress;
 Till gold and crimson paled in watching skies,
 And twilight touched them with its tenderness.

Long hours the Lady Moon, slow dropping west,
 Thrilled the dark water with her lovely face,
 Until he turned, ensnared with soft delight;
 And, with the heavens' image on his breast,
 Drew from the fervor of the Land's embrace,
 And left her lonely, tearless, to the night.

NANNIE BYRD TURNER.



DRAMATIC TRUTHS

YOU can't tell a theatrical manager by the company he keeps.
 Although building contractors are not actors, yet we often see them
 "bringing down the house."

The farmer in the rustic play is liked; the hero receives applause; but no
 one takes as well as the pickpocket.

Because an actress, on the stage, has wings on either side of her, does not
 prove that she's an angel.



TAKING NO CHANCES

MADGE—Why did she insist on such a short engagement?
 MARJORIE—He was worth a million.



IF all men were known by their companions, they wouldn't have any.

THE HONOR OF THE REGIMENT

By Edward Breck

A HANDSOME pair they made, Teutonic beauty and manliness at their best; he, in his becoming, dark, double-breasted uniform with the "interims-cap," his blond mustache turned up slightly, and his blue eyes radiant with pride and happiness; and she, in her pretty, tailor-made street dress, herself blonde as Gretchen, and leaning lovingly on his arm. They were engaged, that was patent to the whole town, and they were making their first promenade since the formal announcement of their betrothal.

To Curt von Thadden, it was a triumphal procession, and the greater was his exultation, for it had begun to look as if he would have to give up either his Olga or his beloved profession of arms, to which he had, like his father and grandfather before him, devoted his life. The younger son of a Prussian infantry colonel, he was, to say the least, not too well endowed with riches, and the laws of the Prussian army are not set aside for any young lieutenant of infantry, be he ever so much in love with the daughter of his brigade commander; for, in Prussia, no officer may enter the holy state of wedlock unless bridegroom or bride, or both together, possess enough of this world's goods, fixed by law according to the bridegroom's rank, to enable the young pair to live in a style commensurate with the dignity of an officer of his Majesty.

Unfortunately for Curt, his beloved was herself the child of a typical military family, richer in honors than in lands, so that, although the old general looked with favor upon the

young and talented lieutenant, the latter had not yet found himself in a position to ask for Olga's plump little hand, and many were the weary hours the young man had spent, pacing up and down his modest chamber, debating the question whether he should give up the army and go into business, with the prospect of earning enough to support himself and his beloved Olga. After all, the army was not everything in the world. There were many decent chaps in business. There were Fuchs and Bardeleben, both insurance men and getting on well; and Fritz Lützow had a first-rate position on a Berlin newspaper. Why not—? But no, no, never! And he would catch up the sword his Kaiser had placed in his hand, and kiss it fervently, passionately, as if begging its forgiveness for his traitorous thoughts.

And, at last, the reward of his constancy had come. A sister of his father, who had married an Austrian and gone with her husband, an engineer, to South America, died, and left Curt von Thadden a legacy of fifty thousand marks. Great were the rejoicings in the regiment, for Curt was a general favorite with both his comrades and the rank and file, though he was as particular as he was just with his men. The old general himself witnessed Curt's signature to the deed of transference, and in a week came the formal announcement of the betrothal of Curt von Thadden, first lieutenant in his Majesty's Sixty-sixth Regiment of Infantry, and Olga Helene, daughter of General of Brigade von Besser, knight of many orders, commanding the Second Brigade of the

First Division of the Nineteenth Army Corps, at Dorndorf on the Elbe. The marriage was to follow shortly.

The progress of the handsome pair around the pretty promenade, which took the place of the walls of the ancient town of Dorndorf, was often interrupted by the hearty congratulations of the passing officers and their ladies, and Curt's hand was almost continually at the visor of his cap in acknowledgment of friendly salutations.

Among those whom they met was a bullet-headed first sergeant, with a somewhat sinister expression of countenance, who saluted in a perfunctory sort of way, without, as the rules prescribe, looking his superior directly in the eye. But Curt was too happy that day to notice such minute transgressions, and he called out, cheerily, "Good morning, Kraus!"

"Morning, sir!" replied the sergeant, in a voice, the surliness of which caught the ear of Olga. Involuntarily, she glanced back in time to see, as it seemed to her, the sergeant raise his hand toward her fiancé as if to shake it at him.

"Who is that non-commissioned officer, Curt?" she asked, a trifle startled.

"Oh, that's the first sergeant of my company; rather a moody fellow, but a fine soldier."

"I didn't like his expression, nor the way he saluted. I don't think he fancies you."

"Who, Kraus? Well, perhaps he doesn't. We've had a trifling tiff or two, but nothing of much account—that is, if he mends his ways." Then, as if moved by an idea, Curt turned, and, perceiving that the sergeant was still standing by a newspaper kiosk, called out to him, "Come here, Kraus!"

The man approached stiffly and saluted.

"Kraus," said Lieutenant von Thadden, "you and I have had a few words in times past, and I have been obliged to be a bit severe sometimes, but to-day I wish well to everybody, and I want you to promise me here, before my

fiancée, who, as you know, is the general's daughter, that you will try to do better in future, for I should be sorry to lose such a fine soldier for his Majesty!"

Kraus's eyes flashed, and his cheeks flamed. "To command, Herr Lieutenant," he stammered; "but—if only—you hadn't humiliated me before the lady! I——"

"Kraus!" exclaimed von Thadden, angrily, "I only hope you will regret those words! I meant only well with you!" And he turned on his heel, and gave his arm to his betrothed, while the sergeant again stiffly saluted and walked off in the opposite direction, muttering to himself. The lieutenant was visibly annoyed at the incident, and his fiancée tried to pacify him.

"Don't worry, dear," she said. "The man's pride was touched."

"His pride!" exclaimed Curt. "He'd better look out for himself! Although first sergeant, one who should set a good example to the whole company, he has lately three times broken the rules of the regiment. The last time, I threatened to complain to the colonel if I caught him at it again. However, let him go. To-day is not the day for getting angry, is it, sweetheart?"

First Sergeant Kraus, though, as his lieutenant had said, an excellent soldier, was deficient in moral sense, and had several times offended against the strict code of behavior that obtains in the German army. Curt von Thadden, who was directly responsible for his subordinate's conduct, had determined to reform the man, or have him reduced to the ranks, and great was his indignation, a few days after his betrothal, to discover, upon inspecting the barracks at the time of shutting the gates, that Kraus was again delinquent. Curt determined to await the man in his own room, and demand an explanation of his conduct. He, therefore, sat down on the cot-bed in the sergeant's little room, lighted the candle, and began to read in a pocket edition of Heine's poems which his Olga had given him that day. The

room of the first sergeant lay at the end of the long corridor, somewhat isolated from the other rooms, and there was a thick partition, pierced by a door, that was kept shut at night.

Curt had had a hard day, for the company had turned out at five o'clock that morning, and he had dined well at the house of his prospective father-in-law. In five minutes, he was leaning against the wall at the head of the cot, fast asleep, with Heine's verses running every moment less distinctly through his brain:

*"Hast du mir die Lippen wund geküsst,
So küsse sie wieder heil,"*

and the rest.

At about two o'clock in the night, the sergeant, returning half-drunk from some jollification, to join which he had broken the rules, ascended the stairs, and entered his room. Upon striking a match, he was astonished and panic-stricken to discover the lieutenant asleep upon his bed, a book in his hand and the candle on the night-table burned out. As soon as he could recover his powers of thought, the sergeant, shielding the light of the match from the lieutenant's face, quickly and noiselessly left the room again, and descended the stairs to the back guard-room, where he lighted another candle and sat down to think. The longer he meditated, the more serious his situation appeared to him, and he could see only dismissal from the army, or, worse, degradation to the ranks, and either meant ruin, as a result of his escapade. His wine-fired imagination painted the consequences blacker and blacker, until, at length, he rose and staggered toward the stairs in a frenzy of desperation.

"Damn him!" he muttered to himself; "if I must go, I'll go for something more than being out drunk after hours!"

Drawing a sword-bayonet from one of the many scabbards that hung upon the wall, he took the candle in his left hand, quickly ascended the stairs, and noiselessly entered his room, closing the door. Setting the candle on a

trunk, and raising the bayonet in his right hand, he shook with his left the lieutenant's arm. With a suppressed cry, the officer started up, only to perceive, by the dim light of the candle, the form of his first sergeant standing over him with uplifted bayonet.

"Keep quiet!" hoarsely whispered Kraus. "If you cry out, you are a dead man, as sure as there is a God in heaven! Now, listen to me! You have persecuted me ever since you joined the regiment. You had it in for me, and are trying to drive me out of the service. Now, I tell you I am a desperate man. I know that this night's work, if the colonel hears of it, will put me in the ranks; but I tell you I'll go to the gallows first. If you don't give me your sacred word of honor as an officer that you will never reveal what I have done to-night, I'll slaughter you like a dog! Will you promise?"

Von Thadden, whose first horrified surprise had rapidly changed to wrathful indignation at this command of his inferior to compromise with wrongdoing, did not hesitate a moment, but gave voice to a hoarse oath, and sprang at the throat of the first sergeant. But, just as he raised himself erect upon the bed, Kraus, who was a powerfully built man, struck him such a forcible blow with the left hand that he fell back prone upon the cot, in a completely helpless position. Taking a step nearer the cot, Kraus held the bayonet poised over von Thadden's breast. The lieutenant could see the crazed expression of his persecutor's face, and recognized that the man was beside himself and fully capable, if thwarted, of carrying out his murderous threat.

"I give you one more chance!" hissed Kraus. "Will you promise not to report me for this, or anything else? Will you? will you? By God, speak, or——"

The weapon gleamed in his hand as he drew back a trifle, to brace himself for the stroke. Though it all took but a few seconds, what a swirl of thoughts rushed through von Thadden's brain!

His honor as an officer, his oath to the Emperor, his approaching promotion! And, then, he seemed to see the appealing eyes of his bride that was so soon to be. Was it right to die like this, and break her heart? The thought, added to the natural instinct of self-preservation, was sufficient for a decision. He groaned aloud, and said:

"Stand off! I promise!"

"On your honor as an officer?"

"Let me up; I have promised!"

The lieutenant rose and, without giving his tormentor a second look, fled from the room and down the stairs. In half an hour, he lay safe in his own bed; but it was not to sleep. The nightmare of his experience drove him, time after time, from his bed, and he finished the night pacing up and down in a half-crazed state of doubt and self-condemnation. Daylight failed to bring relief to his sufferings, and he all but fainted at sight of the first sergeant at roll-call. Gloomy and distraught, he passed day after day, nor did even the companionship of his betrothed soothe the poignancy of his sufferings. Instinctively, she felt that he was grievously troubled in spirit; but all her pleadings could not draw from him the cause of it. He grew haggard and nervous, and got to be excitable in the highest degree.

One evening, after dinner, the old general was discussing a cigar in his library with von Thadden and one of the regimental majors, when he took from a drawer in his writing-desk a big envelope of official appearance, and said, holding it out toward Curt, "My boy, I hinted at table that something good was going to happen to you soon, and, if I'm not mistaken, you'll find that contains your commission as captain. God grant it!"

But the young man, instead of joyfully receiving this magic package, which contained the realization of his fond hopes, rose with pale face and trembling limbs, and gasped, "Oh, my God, no, I can't take it!"

The general and his friend stared at Curt as if he were demented.

"Not take it? What are you thinking of, lad? Are you crazy?"

"My God, I believe I am, or I shall be soon if this keeps on!" He took one or two agitated turns up and down the room, while the others observed him with dubious countenances. Suddenly, he stopped in front of the general, and said:

"Father, I demand to be confronted by the Court of Honor!"

The general, restraining himself with difficulty, replied: "Why, what is the matter, Curt?"

"The matter is, sir, that I have been false to my duty as his Majesty's officer!"

The old general started as if struck. "Curt!" he gasped. "No, no! That you never could be!"

"Yes, I have, I have! Listen, sir; it was like this. I must tell you. I must relieve my mind, or I shall go crazy!" And, with the eloquence of a man who has all but gone mad on one subject, the wretched officer told them the story of Kraus's attempt, while the two elder men listened in awful silence. When he had finished, the old general tottered to his feet, and made a step toward the lieutenant. He was in the act of laying his hand on the young man's shoulder when, of a sudden, he turned away and exclaimed, as if in agony:

"No, no! I can't do it! My God, Curt, why did you break your word to the man? Can't you see that your not reporting him was simply nothing compared with that? To break your word of honor—you, a Prussian officer! Oh—!" And the poor old fellow covered his face with his hands, and wept aloud. "My poor girl!" he sobbed; "my poor Olga!"

Curt watched him in abject horror, which deepened into despair as the dreadful consciousness of his breach of faith came over him. But, before he could collect himself sufficiently to speak, the aged general, suddenly drawing himself up and dashing the unmanly tears from his eyes, exclaimed:

"Lieutenant von Thadden, go to

your room! All further steps shall be mine. Major, have the goodness to send for Colonel von Prittwitz!"

With brain paralyzed, but retaining the instincts of a soldier, Curt von Thadden bowed low to the general, and left the room. As he burst through the drawing-room, on his way to the house-door, he encountered his fiancée, who started at sight of his pale face and staring eyes.

"Curt, what is the matter?" she inquired, anxiously. For answer, he clasped her passionately in his arms, kissed her again and again, and then released her, murmuring, convulsively, "Good-bye, my darling, good-bye!" The next moment he was gone.

The next morning the *Ehrengericht*, or Court of Honor, of the Sixty-sixth Regiment, convened at Brigade headquarters, for the convenience of the commanding general, who had requested permission to be present at the inquiry. The court, an unofficial but powerful tribunal, to which all matters concerning the honor of the regimental officers are submitted, was made up, in the present instance, of four officers, all above the rank of first lieutenant, and the colonel, who presided. General von Besser occupied an arm-chair near the table at which the court sat. The colonel brought his hand down upon a call-bell that stood before him on the table. An orderly appeared.

"Ask First Lieutenant von Thadden to come!"

The orderly saluted, and withdrew, and, in a few moments, von Thadden, pale but collected, appeared. He was dressed in full uniform with helmet, sword and white gloves, and he bowed gravely to the court and to General von Besser, before taking the chair provided for him on the other side of the table. Not a word was spoken. In a moment, the colonel rang for the second time. The orderly reappeared.

"Have First Sergeant Kraus brought in!" was the command.

Kraus entered with a somewhat puzzled look on his surly face, but,

as he came forward with military step to salute the officers, he caught sight of Lieutenant von Thadden, started perceptibly and frowned. Von Thadden himself kept his eyes fixed straight before him, his hands tightly clasping the pommel of his saber. Kraus was ill at ease, and stood first on one foot and then on the other. But the court soon cut short his embarrassment.

"Kraus," began the colonel, "were you discovered on the morning of the thirtieth of August, at about two o'clock, by First Lieutenant von Thadden, while entering your room in the barracks?"

Startled, Kraus turned as pale as his bronzed countenance would permit, and involuntarily glanced at the lieutenant, who avoided his look. After a moment's hesitation, he answered:

"Why, no, colonel, I was not!"

General von Besser leaned eagerly forward with a gleam of hope on his careworn features. But the colonel, with his piercing eyes fixed on the non-commissioned officer, said, in stern tones:

"Kraus, your only hope of leniency is to tell the truth and the exact truth! The facts are already known to us. From you, we need only confirmation, and I strongly advise you, for your own sake, as well as for the honor of the regiment, to avoid all prevarication." Then, after a slight pause, he asked: "On the occasion just mentioned, did you find Lieutenant von Thadden waiting in your room?"

"Yes, sir," replied Kraus, with eyes fixed on the floor.

"Did he report you for being out after hours?"

"No, sir; he swore to me on his honor as an officer never to report me, nor to tell on me in any way—on his honor as an officer—shame!" cried the sergeant, losing control of himself.

"Silence!" shouted the colonel. "Confine yourself to direct answers to my questions, or it will go hard with you! Now, did Lieutenant von Thadden make you this promise of

his own free will? Think twice before you answer!"

"N-no, sir. I was a—a little excited, and I may have said something, I——"

"You were drunk, and you threatened to assassinate him if he refused to give you that promise! Is that true?" thundered the colonel.

"Y-yes, sir," replied the completely cowed sergeant, in almost a whisper.

"That is all! You may go. Your case will be attended to later."

Kraus saluted and left the room rapidly, guarded by two orderlies.

The colonel turned to von Thadden, and opened his mouth as if to speak but his lips trembled, tears came into his eyes, and he involuntarily grasped the arms of his chair as if to steady himself. After a moment's pause, he began speaking, in a half-choked voice and with great effort:

"Lieutenant von Thadden, we sit here, you well know, as much your friends as your judges. There is not one of us but likes you and is proud of your record. Your honored father died while in command of our beloved regiment, and you yourself seemed, by your talents and your zeal, fitted to rise high in his Majesty's service. But, my son, you are also aware how high a standard of honor obtains among us, a standard that it is our pride to maintain as high as that of any regiment in the army. You know that there are things that our code regards as unpardonable, however extenuating the circumstances attending the act may be, and that among these things the breaking of one's sacred word of honor is prominent. No matter how or why, no man can break his word of honor, and yet remain an officer of his Majesty's Sixty-sixth Regiment! My son, we, your well-wishers, are not here to deal with motives, but with facts. As men, each one of our hearts overflows with pity and sympathy for you. Not one of us dares say that, under the same circumstances, he would not have acted as you did. But, as

officers, as members of the Court of Honor, there is but one plain, inexorable duty that awaits us, in view of the facts, certified to by yourself and now substantiated by the miserable cause of all this distress, and that is, First Lieutenant von Thadden, to demand your resignation from the Royal Prussian army! This, gentlemen, is, I believe, the course decided upon by us, in case Sergeant Kraus should corroborate the words of the accused."

The four other members of the court bowed their heads, solemnly, in assent. For a moment, a silence, awful, oppressive, ensued. Then, von Thadden, pulling himself together with a supreme effort, rose and stood in front of the judges' table. Bowing low, he said, in a voice that was calm, but charged with deep emotion, "May God protect the Sixty-sixth Regiment!"

Then, he turned and left the room, with head erect.

Again silence ensued, broken only by the colonel fidgeting with his papers. The general sat so still, so rigid, that one of the other officers feared he had fainted, and went toward him. But the old man, who seemed to have aged ten years in as many minutes, rose from his chair unsteadily, and, with the tears streaming down his cheeks, murmured, in broken accents:

"My poor girl! oh, my poor girl!"

Curt von Thadden walked through the streets of the little city and straight out into the open country. His thoughts were in confusion, and he made no effort to collect them. He dreaded to force them to a contemplation of the awful reality. Musical themes ran through his head, and especially the melody of Schubert's "Withered Flowers," an old favorite of his:

"And when she wanders the churchyard through,
And fondly thinks, 'His heart was true!'
Then, all ye flowers, oh, bloom and blow,
For May is coming and gone is the snow!"

Involuntarily, the thought of his sweetheart came into his distracted

mind, and he sank down on a leaf-strewn bank, overcome by his emotions. "My God!" he exclaimed, "what will she think of me?"

Then he wandered on, and the "Fate" *motif* from Wagner's Trilogy haunted his mind, and gave him no peace. For hours, he walked on without aim, until he almost instinctively bent his steps in a great circle about the town to his own door. As in a dream, he ascended the stairs, and entered his little room. It was already dusk, and he lighted his lamp. Upon the table lay two packages. One was a small box from which he took a little bunch of myrtle. The tears started to his eyes as he held it to his lips.

"My darling!" he murmured; "my darling!"

The other package was heavier, and, as he took it in his hand, his face blanched, and he was obliged to steady himself by grasping the back of a chair. He stripped the paper from the package, and revealed—an army revolver! A slip of white paper fluttered to the floor. He picked it up, and read:

"Remember the honor of the regiment!"

Curt laughed aloud, convulsively.

"Oh, have no fear!" he cried; "have no fear, comrades! The honor of the Sixty-sixth is safe!"

Raising the revolver and pointing it at his forehead, he shouted:

"God save the Kaiser!"

A report, a heavy fall, then silence. The honor of the regiment was saved.



MY REFUGE

THE day has been long and dreary,
 With ceaseless patter of rain,
 And the dragging hours have brought me
 Only some heart-ache and pain.
 As I turn my sad face homeward,
 The night drops down from above,
 And my heart is yearning, yearning
 For a touch of the arms I love—

The arms that have never failed me,
 The refuge to which I flee;
 All day, 'mid the jar of the city,
 I dream of them waiting for me—
 Dream of their rest and their welcome,
 After a daytime of care;
 O arms, outstretched in the gloaming,
 O arms of my easy-chair!

SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY.



THE KIND MR. CATTERSON

MRS. HATTERSON—Do you get an allowance from your husband?
 MRS. CATTERSON—Several; why, he makes them for me!

CUPID'S GRADUATE

IN days when I groped in the darkness
 Of languages dreary and dead,
 And tried to get Hadley and Harkness
 Stowed safely away in my head;
 When square and cube roots grew around me,
 And tangled my pathway to school,
 You came like an angel, and found me
 And loved me—a fool.

You helped in the hard conjugations—
To love was the verb I knew best;
 You solved all the horrid equations
 That burdened my brain with unrest;
 And when you accomplished all this, you
 Were satisfied always, at once,
 If I would but bend down and kiss you,
 Your lover and—dunce.

I was not exactly the chap to
 Grow famous in college, and yet
 I learned quite as much as one's apt to,
 And finished without a regret;
 Then back came your bachelor stupid—
 Dear girl, I had some sense, you see—
 And took a course given by Cupid,
 And won his degree!

FELIX CARMEN.



THE prisoner, who had been found guilty of *lèse majesté*, protested vigorously, and struggled with all his peasant strength, as he was borne to prison, where he was to pay the penalty of his crime.

It was realized that his case was hopeless, when it was proved, by unimpeachable evidence, that he had sat down in the presence of his royal highness, the king.

Of course, there were simple-minded persons who suggested that the offender's lack of premeditation, his hobnailed shoes, and the smooth sheet of ice on which the crime had been committed, were extenuatives. But what would justice ever accomplish were she to be hindered by such trivialities as these?



PHILOSOPHY is power to see the humor in our own grief.

LE CANTONNIER

Par François Coppée

SA Majesté la Reine de Bohême —il y aura toujours un royaume de Bohême pour les conteurs—voyage dans l'incognito le plus strict et le plus modeste, sous le nom de comtesse des Sept-Châteaux et seulement accompagnée de la vieille baronne de Georgenthal, sa dame lectrice, et du général Horschowitz, son chevalier d'honneur.

Malgré les bouillottes et les fourrures, il a fait continuellement froid dans le compartiment réservé, et quand la Reine, lasse de son roman anglais ou impatientée par le tricot du général—car le général tricote—voulait jeter un regard sur la campagne blanche de neige, elle était forcée de frotter un moment avec son mouchoir la vitre du wagon, que la gelée couvrait d'étincelants micas et de délicates fougères de glace. En vérité, c'est un caprice singulier, et bien digne d'une tête de vingt ans qu'a eu Sa Majesté de partir pour Paris en plein hiver, et d'aller y retrouver sa mère, la Reine de Moravie, qui devait la venir voir à Prague au printemps prochain. N'importe, il a fallu se mettre en route par dix degrés au-dessous de zéro; la baronne a dû secouer ses vieux rhumatismes; le général, au désespoir, a laissé là un magnifique couvre-pieds qu'il était en train de tricoter pour sa belle-fille, n'emportant pour tromper les ennuis du chemin, que de quoi confectionner une modeste paire de bas de laine. Le voyage a été rude; toute l'Europe est couverte de neige et l'on vient d'en traverser la moitié, avec beaucoup de retards et de difficultés, sur des chemins de fer dont

le service est désorganisé par la rigueur de la saison. Enfin le but se rapproche; ce soir, à neuf heures, on a dîné au buffet de Mâcon, et bien que, cette nuit encore, les bouillottes soient à peine tièdes et qu'au dehors de gros flocons blancs voltigent dans les ténèbres, la baronne et le général, sommeillant sous les manteaux fourrés et les couvertures, rêvent, chacun dans leur coin, de l'arrivée et du séjour à Paris, où la bonne dame pourra satisfaire une petite dévotion spéciale et où le vieux brave se rendra sans retard dans un certain magasin de lainages de la rue Saint-Honoré, le seul où il puisse rassortir convenablement ses écheveaux verts.

Quant à la Reine, elle ne dort pas.

Fiévreuse et frissonnante dans sa grande pelisse de renard bleu, le coude dans le capiton et la main crispée parmi le désordre des magnifiques cheveux couleur de paille qui s'échappent de son coquet talpack de voyage, elle songe, les grands yeux ouverts dans la pénombre, écoutant machinalement les vagues et lointaines musiques que les oreilles fatiguées des voyageurs croient entendre dans le galop de fer des express. Elle revit toute son existence par le souvenir, la pauvre jeune Reine, et elle songe qu'elle est bien malheureuse.

Elle se revoit d'abord, petite princesse à mains rouges et à taille plate, auprès de sa sœur jumelle, celle qu'on a mariée tout là-bas, dans le Nord, de sa sœur qu'elle aimait tant et qui lui ressemblait à tel point que, lorsqu'elles avaient le même costume,

il fallait leur mettre dans les cheveux des nœuds de rubans de couleurs différentes pour ne pas les confondre. C'était avant que l'émeute eût renversé le trône de ses parents, et elle aimait l'atmosphère calme et assoupissante de la petite cour d'Olmütz où l'étiquette était tempérée par la bonhomie; c'était le temps où son père, le bon roi Louis V., qui depuis lors est mort de chagrin en exil, l'emmenait à pied, à travers le parc, sans quitter son habit de cour et ses plaques, prendre avec sa sœur le café au lait, à quatre heures de l'après-midi, dans un pavillon chinois, envahi par les liserons et la vigne vierge, d'où l'on voyait le cours de la rivière et le lointain amphithéâtre des collines rougies par l'automne.

Puis c'était son mariage, et le grand bal de la présentation, en cette belle nuit de juillet où l'on entendait monter, par les fenêtres ouvertes, le murmure de la foule qui se pressait dans les jardins illuminés. Comme elle tremblait, quand on l'avait laissée seule un instant dans la serre avec le jeune roi! Elle l'aimait pourtant déjà, elle l'avait aimé dès le premier regard, quand il s'était avancé, l'aigrette blanche au bonnet, si élégant et si souple dans son uniforme bleu tout endiamanté, et faisant sonner à chaque pas les éperons d'or recourbés de ses petites bottes grises à mille plis. Après la première valse, Ottokar lui avait pris le bras, et tout en caressant sa longue moustache noire, l'avait conduite dans la serre, l'avait fait asseoir sous un grand palmier, puis, se plaçant à côté d'elle et lui prenant la main avec la plus noble aisance, lui avait dit, en la regardant dans les yeux: "Princesse, voulez-vous me faire l'honneur de devenir ma femme?" Alors elle avait rougi, baissé le front et répondu en comprimant d'une main les battements fous de son cœur: "Oui, sire!" tandis que les violons enragés des Tziganes attaquaient tous ensemble la première note de la marche tchèque, ce chant sublime d'enthousiasme et de triomphe!

Hélas! comme ce bonheur s'était vite envolé! Six mois d'erreur et d'illusion, six mois à peine, et puis, un jour, en pleine grossesse, un hasard brutal lui apprenait qu'elle était trompée, que le roi ne l'aimait pas, ne l'avait jamais aimée, et que le lendemain même de son mariage, il avait soupé chez la Gazella, la première danseuse du théâtre de Prague, une fille. Et ce n'était pas tout! Elle avait su alors ce qu'elle était seule à ignorer, la vieille liaison d'Ottokar avec la comtesse de Pzibrann, dont il avait trois enfants, qu'il n'avait jamais quittée au milieu de cent fantaisies, et dont il avait eu l'audace de faire la première dame d'honneur de sa femme. L'amour de la Reine fut tué du coup, ce frère et timide amour qu'elle n'avait jamais osé avouer à son mari et qu'elle comparait maintenant à cet oiseau privé qu'étant petite fille, elle avait étouffé dans sa main fermée brusquement, en tressaillant au bruit d'une potiche cassée par une fille de chambre.

Son fils! Sans doute, elle avait un fils, et elle l'aimait; mais, chose affreuse! bien souvent, assise auprès du berceau doré et timbré de la couronne royale, où dormait son petit Wladislas, la Reine avait senti passer dans son cœur comme un courant de glace en regardant cet enfant, engendré par un homme qui l'avait atrocement, cyniquement outragée. D'ailleurs, elle ne l'avait jamais à elle, à elle toute seule du moins. Ce n'était plus comme chez ses bons parents, que—nouvelle douleur—une révolution venait de chasser au loin, et tout s'accomplissait, dans cette antique et orgueilleuse cour de Bohême, d'après les lois du plus étroit cérémonial. Tout un essaim de duègnes et de nourrices sèches, vieilles dames à grands airs et à bonnets montés, s'agitait autour du berceau royal, et, lorsque la Reine venait s'informer de son fils et l'embrasser, on lui disait avec solennité: "Son Altesse a un peu toussé cette nuit— Son Altesse souffre des dents—" Et il lui semblait que les haleines glacées de ces femmes soufflaient sur son cœur de mère pour le glacer et pour l'éteindre.

Ah! vraiment, elle n'en pouvait plus, la pauvre Reine, et la vie était trop mauvaise. Aussi, parfois, succombant de chagrin et d'ennui, elle obtenait du roi licence d'aller voir la Reine de Moravie, réfugiée en France; elle se sauvait, elle s'évadait comme d'une prison—seule, car la tradition s'opposait à ce que le prince-héritier voyageât sans son père—et elle courait pleurer toutes ses larmes, les deux bras jetés au cou de sa mère en cheveux gris.

Cette fois-ci, elle était partie subitement, sans demander la permission et après un rapide baiser sur le front de Wladislav endormi; car elle était comme folle de dégoût et de honte. La débauche du roi devenait chaque jour plus publique; il avait maintenant des ménages et des familles dans toutes les villes de la Bohême, dans tous ses rendez-vous de chasse. C'était partout une risée, et l'on chantait, dans les rues de Prague, des couplets satiriques où l'on se demandait ce que deviendrait cette race illégitime, et si, comme jadis Auguste le Fort, Ottokar ne ferait pas de tous ses bâtards un escadron de gardes d'honneur. Pour subvenir aux frais d'un tel pullulement, le roi faisait argent de tout, épuisait et endettait l'Etat. Le commerce des décorations était particulièrement scandaleux, et l'on citait un tailleur de Vienne qui avait fait fortune en vendant, pour cinq cents florins, aux amateurs de croix étrangères, des habits noirs dans la poche et à la boutonnière desquels on trouvait le brevet et le ruban de l'ordre le plus illustre de la Bohême, d'un ordre militaire qui date de la guerre de Trente Ans.

Mais quoi donc? Depuis un moment, le train ralentit sa marche; il s'arrête. Que signifie cette halte en rase campagne, en pleine nuit? Le général et la baronne se sont éveillés très inquiets; et le chevalier d'honneur, ayant baissé la glace, se penche dans le noir hors de la portière; et voilà que le lanterne du chef de train, qui courait dans la neige le long des voi-

tures, s'arrête, s'élève et éclaire tout à coup les moustaches blanches de chat en colère et le bonnet de loutre du général.

"Qu'y a-t-il? Pourquoi cet arrêt?" demande le vieil Horschowitz.

"Il y a, monsieur, que nous voilà en détresse pour une heure au moins—Deux pieds de neige! Plus moyen d'avancer! Les Parisiens se passeront demain de café au lait."

"Comment? Une heure à rester ici, par ce temps! Vous savez, les bouillottes sont froides——"

"Que voulez-vous, monsieur? On vient de télégraphier à Tonnerre pour avoir une équipe de balayeurs. Mais, je vous le répète, il y en a au moins pour une heure."

Et l'homme s'éloigne avec sa lanterne, du côté de la locomotive.

"Mais c'est abominable! mais Votre Majesté va prendre un rhume!" glapit la baronne.

"En effet, j'ai froid," dit la Reine en frissonnant.

Le général comprend que c'est le moment d'être héroïque; il saute sur la voie, enfonce dans la neige jusqu'aux genoux et rattrape l'homme à la lanterne. Il lui parle à demi voix.

"Mais, quand ce serait le Grand-Mogol, je n'y pourrais rien," répond l'employé. "Cependant, nous sommes devant une maison de cantonnier; il doit avoir du feu chez lui—et si cette dame veut descendre?—eh, Sabatier?"

Une seconde lanterne s'approche.

"Allez donc voir si le cantonnier a du feu dans sa maison."

Fort heureusement, il en a. Le général est plus heureux que s'il avait gagné une bataille ou terminé la dernière bande de tricot de son fameux couvre-pieds. Il revient au compartiment de la Reine, fait part du résultat de ses démarches, et, un instant après, les trois voyageurs, tapant des pieds pour faire tomber la neige accumulée sous leurs chaussures, sont dans la salle basse de la maisonnette, où le cantonnier, qui vient de les introduire et qui a gardé sa peau de bique, s'agenouille devant la cheminée et jette du bois mort sur les landiers.

La Reine, assise devant la flamme joyeuse, a rejeté sa pelisse sur le dossier de sa chaise de paille; elle a ôté ses longs gants de Suède pour se chauffer les mains, et elle regarde autour d'elle.

C'est une chambre de paysan. On marche sur l'aire sèche et raboteuse; des bottes d'oignons pendent aux poutres enfumées; il y a un vieux fusil de braconnier sur deux clous au-dessus de la cheminée et quelques assiettes à fleurs sur le buffet. Le général a fait la grimace tout à l'heure en apercevant, piquées au mur par des épingles, deux images d'Epinal: le portrait de M. Thiers, orné du grand cordon de la Légion d'honneur, et celui de Garibaldi en chemise rouge. Mais ce qui attire l'attention de la jeune Reine, c'est, auprès du grand lit et demi-caché par les rideaux de cotonnade rayée, un berceau d'osier d'où vient de sortir le geignement d'un enfant qui s'éveille.

Bien vite, le cantonnier a laissé son feu et est allé vers le berceau, et voilà qu'il le balance doucement.

Il a l'air d'un bon père, l'homme à la peau de bique, avec son crâne chauve de Saint Pierre, sa moustache rude d'ancien soldat et ses deux grandes rides tristes dans les joues.

"C'est votre petite fille?" lui demande la Reine avec intérêt.

"Oui, madame, c'est ma Cécile— elle aura trois ans le mois prochain."

"Mais—sa mère—?" interroge Sa Majesté avec hésitation, et comme l'homme secoue la tête: "Vous êtes veuf?"

Mais il fait un nouveau signe de dénégation. Alors, la Reine, tout émue, se lève, s'approche du berceau et regarde Cécile qui s'est rendormie, en serrant tendrement sur son cœur un petit caniche de carton.

"Pauvre enfant!" murmure-t-elle.

"N'est-ce pas, madame," dit alors le cantonnier d'une voix sourde, "n'est-ce pas qu'il faut qu'une mère ait bien peu de cœur pour abandonner sa fille à cet âge-là? Qu'elle m'ait quitté, moi, après tout, c'est de ma faute— J'avais eu tort d'épouser une

femme trop jeune pour moi, tort de la laisser aller à la ville, où elle a fait de mauvaises connaissances— Mais abandonner cette amour!— N'est-ce pas que c'est une infamie?— Enfin il faudra bien que je l'élève à moi tout seul, le pauvre chiffon!— C'est difficile, allez, à cause du service. Le soir, je suis souvent forcé de la laisser là, criant et pleurant, quand j'entends siffler le train.— Mais, dans la journée, par exemple, je l'emporte avec moi, et elle est déjà bien aguerrie, la mignonne, elle n'a plus peur du chemin de fer.— Tenez, hier, je la tenais sur mon bras gauche tandis que de la main droite je présentais mon fanion. Eh bien, elle n'a pas seulement tressailli au passage du rapide.— Ce qui m'embarrasse le plus, voyez-vous, c'est de lui coudre ses robes et ses bonnets.— Heureusement qu'on a été caporal aux zouaves, dans le temps, et qu'on connaît un peu le fil et les aiguilles."

"Mais, mon pauvre homme," reprend la Reine, "c'est une tâche bien difficile.— Ecoutez, je désire vous aider.— Il doit y avoir un village aux environs, et, dans ce village, des braves gens qui se chargeront de garder votre petite fille.— Si ce n'est qu'une question d'argent.—"

Mais le cantonnier hoche encore la tête.

"Non, ma bonne dame, non. Je ne suis pas fieret j'accepterai de bon cœur tout ce qu'on voudra bien faire pour Cécile—mais je ne m'en séparerai jamais—non, pas même une heure!"

"Mais pourquoi?"

"Pourquoi?" répond l'homme d'une voix sombre. "Parce que je ne me fie qu'à moi pour faire de cette enfant ce que n'a pas été sa mère—une honnête femme! Mais, pardon, auriez-vous l'obligeance de bercer un peu Cécile? On a besoin de moi sur la voie."

Saura-t-on jamais à quoi pensait la jeune Reine de Bohême, dans cette nuit d'hiver où elle a bercé pendant une heure l'enfant d'un pauvre can-

tonnier, tandis que le général et la baronne, dont elle avait refusé l'assistance, faisaient le gros dos devant le feu? Quand le chef de train a ouvert la porte et a crié: "Allons, messieurs et dames, l'express va repartir—en voiture!" la Reine a déposé sur le berceau de la petite Cécile son porte-monnaie gonflé d'or et le bouquet de violettes de sa ceinture, et elle est remontée en wagon.

Mais Sa Majesté n'a passé que deux jours à Paris; elle est tout de suite revenue à Prague, d'où elle ne s'absente presque plus, et où elle se consacre tout entière à l'éducation de son fils. Les gouvernantes à trente

quartiers qui jetaient sur l'enfance du prince-héritier l'ombre de leurs bonnets funèbres, n'ont plus que des sinécures. S'il y a encore des rois en Europe quand le petit Wladislas aura grandi, il sera ce que n'a pas été son père, un bon roi. A cinq ans, il est déjà très populaire, et lorsqu'il voyage avec sa mère sur ces bons chemins de fer de Bohême qui vont comme des fiacres, et qu'il aperçoit par la portière du wagon-salon un cantonnier portant un bambin sur son bras et présentant de l'autre son petit drapeau, le royal enfant, à qui sa mère fait un signe, lui envoie toujours un baiser.



MY TRUTH

GOD'S truth is in the mystery of things,
 And power is in the frailness He has wrought;
 So feeling hearts have songs of noblest thought
 When gentlest touches come upon the strings.
 The purple hour of vesper-worship brings
 Soul-flights less high than flowering meads have brought;
 And in the world no surpliced one has taught
 What hearts may learn from birds' low carolings.
 God lives in all the fairness He has made,
 And holy are the frailties of His hand;
 And I am wise when I have full obeyed
 The promptings I can little understand;
 And I am strong when I have wept and prayed
 And loved the weakness of a woman's hand.

EDWIN LATHAM QUARLES.



INCONVENIENT

MRS. GRAMERCY—When is she going to take the first step toward procuring her divorce?

MRS. PARK—Not until the Spring. Not one of the divorce colonies is situated in a good Winter resort.



COLLEGE-BRED is often a four-years' loaf.

CHOICE

THE eyes of one shall open on the morn
 Where sunrise fires stain the white peaks afar,
 Another, in the valley, where no star
 Breaks on the gloom, of sea and midnight born;
 And where the poppies riot through the corn
 The one, unshod, may pass without a scar—
 The other's struggling hands no gates unbar;
 Thus one shall have the rose, and one the thorn.

If I could choose, and could not be denied,
 Thy way would lie in many a sunny field,
 While through the night my thorny path would be;
 Forever in the dark would I abide,
 And I would be thy solace and thy shield,
 If I could choose—if I could choose for thee!

MYRTLE REED



HUMAN NATURE

“WHAT are the respective ages of the father and the son?”
 “Well, I judge that the former is over fifty, because I notice he likes
 to be called ‘my boy;’ and that the latter is under twenty-five, for the reason
 that it pleases him to be addressed as ‘old man.’”



BORROWING TROUBLE

MILDRED (*a college girl, to her room-mate*)—Katharine, if you will lend me
 ten dollars, I shall be everlastingly indebted to you.

KATHARINE (*who speaks from experience*)—I don't doubt it.

E. M. H.



“WAGSTER is a great man-about-town, isn't he?”
 “Yes. Why, he had to resign from his home, as he found it was inter-
 fering with his clubs.”

THE OTHER ONE

By Walter E. Grogan

“THERE is, of course, the other one,” Bella said, with the air of imparting superfluous information.

“There generally is,” I assented.

“But——”

“That is the worst of it,” I said, pityingly. “The other one is always prefaced by a ‘but.’ He has virtue enough for consideration, and the disqualifying vice of a ‘but.’ So it must be the one,” I went on, decisively. “And I will have a little more tea—yes, lemon and sugar, please.”

Bella manipulated the tea-things, lingeringly. She has very good hands, and her manicure is beyond reproach. A frown gathered her brow into incipient satin folds.

“I really don’t know,” she said, slowly. Suddenly, she dropped a lump of sugar into my cup, with a splash. “Of course, you know, I dislike him very much?”

“The one? Of course, you do. There are limits to your originality.”

“If I could only hate him, it would be tolerable.”

“It would be delightful. Hatred is the most satisfying of all sensations.”

“But I can’t—he is so dolefully every-day.”

“And the other one is——?”

She glanced at me, swiftly. “I have mentioned no name,” she said.

“It is not necessary. The other one is merely a type. He represents all the alluring charms of the impossible.”

“I suppose he is impossible,” she said, doubtfully.

“Of course; all alluring things are. The one is possible, the other one im-

possible. It is a law of human nature.”

“He is very rich—the one, you know. That is satisfactory. Unfortunately, that is the only satisfactory feature about him.”

“Even the stock-exchange has its one redeeming feature.”

“But he is so stock-exchangeey!”

“He belongs to an excellent club,” I said. I did not like Carter—he was too estimable a man to like—but I am judicial in my dealings with human problems, and being judicial is being fair—outside the trammels of law. My cousin Bella invariably consulted me upon private matters. Invariably, also, she chose her own solution afterward.

“You may judge men by the clubs which keep them,” she said.

“It is eminently respectable.”

“Then, you see!” She shrugged her shoulders, eloquently. “Life would be like one of those tidy, smug, German pleasure-gardens.”

“Without the beer-house.”

“Exactly; a sort of infinitely decorous boarding-house—if you can imagine such a thing—full of neat rules, neatly kept. Oh, the absolutely numbing horror of having pattern years, all scrupulously the same, carefully threaded upon thin, attenuated, every-day conversation!”

“It does sound hopeless,” I assented.

“But he is very rich,” she added, musingly.

“And the other one is naturally poor.”

“Unnaturally poor. Poverty is romantic in perspective, but very patchy when you are close to it.”

"Poverty is merely relative, Bella," I said, sententiously.

"That is one of the smugly untrue truths. Poverty is—poverty, and it cannot be anything else. It means conjured entrées and a month behind the fashions. It means dress-circle tickets. There can be nothing worse than dress-circle tickets. People go to the dress-circle only through poverty or ostentatious propriety."

I began to be interested. Most of Bella's problems were interesting, but this one promised more.

"There appears to be a difficulty," I said.

"A difficulty?"

"Of choice. I suppose there must be a choice?"

"I suppose so," she said, dubiously. She smoothed a chiffon, and then plucked it up again.

"There is Carter, on the one hand."

"You don't like Mr. Carter," she said, irrelevantly.

"No," I assented; "that makes me kinder to him—theoretically. He is too informative for liking. He is a species of human cold bath—very good for you, very bracing, but unpleasant."

"A life of perpetual cold bath does not sound promising," said Bella.

"There can be no doubt he would make an excellent——"

"Don't!" cried Bella. "I hate that word! And does one wish one who is excellent? Just fancy a quarrelless person!"

"It would be a change for you."

"Ah, yes! but one wishes a change for a month, or for six months, not for a lifetime. Besides," she went on, warming to her subject, "a change negatives itself in time. When does a change become not a change, but merely dull routine?"

"When difference becomes the same."

"That sounds paradoxical."

"Truth is always paradoxical— But there is the other one."

"Yes," she mused; "there is the other one."

"The question is, would he make an excellent——?"

"Oh, certainly not! He is a man of many rôles, but, decidedly, he could not play that. He is perhaps most charming as the other one."

"A man of whims?"

"A man one can quarrel with."

"Therefore attractive."

"Of course; but impossible—oh, perfectly impossible! All attractive men are impossible. That accounts for their attractiveness. One always longs for the food that is absolutely poisonous, and for the color that is fatal."

"Really, Bella, it does seem hopeless. Common-sense suggests Carter."

"That is so fatal to his chances!"

"With you, yes."

"I should not be—should not be—" She paused, and looked at me.

"Charming," I said, dutifully.

"I suppose I am that," she admitted.

"Of course," I answered, promptly.

"I have been here twice this week, and it is not wholly because the tea——"

"I really beg your pardon. Another cup?"

"Thanks." Her hands are remarkably pretty, and I willingly imperil my nerves for the sake of seeing them flutter like white pigeons above the Dresden. "—not wholly," I continued, "because the tea is excellent."

"I should not be charming if I had common-sense. Common-sense is one of those reliable virtues which are the backbone of the Nonconformist. It is so like thick-soled boots—very useful in bad, uncomfortable weather, but out of place—here."

"And the other one is impossible?"

"I am afraid so."

"Which means, you hope not, but are sure he is. Poor Bella! the position is hopeless, quite hopeless."

"Is there no way out—no little breach in the fence to scramble through?" She looked at me, pleadingly. I remembered an appointment vaguely, and thought idly of the wording of the excuse I should have to scribble when I reached my rooms.

"You will, of course, be definite with Carter——"

"That will be difficult."

"—and permit the other one to remain the other one."

"That would be pleasant, but would he?"

"He is probably used to it, poor beggar!"

"Used to it?"

"That sort of man always is the other one. Probably, he commences life by hoping to be the one; but a long training at—at different people's hands soon shows him his real position. He is a living example of, 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

"He—they serve their purpose very well."

"Yes; the waiter is not only a useful, but oftentimes an ornamental, beast."

"Poor beast!" She looked at me with a sigh, and smiled.

"Yes, poor beast! He grows philosophical, looking on at the others feasting. It is often bad enough to be the guest at a dinner—some dinners; it is infinitely worse to be the waiter."

"You are eloquent on the wrongs of the other one."

"I am equally emphatic on his rights."

"His rights?" She lifted arched eyebrows, in pretty query.

"His rights to serve. It is all he can do, poor beggar! He can help at life's feast, but may not dine."

"You speak authoritatively."

I sighed. It was an effective sigh, suggested rather than insisted.

"I, too, am in the ranks." Then, I paused and looked at her. She regarded her shoes, minutely. She was undeniably pretty. She was also my cousin, and there had been moments when I regretted the limitations of that relationship and the barrier circumstances made against drawing it closer.

"The other one under consideration," I recommenced, "is—" I paused and looked at her.

"Is—?" she prompted, innocently.

"Worthy of all sympathy."

"Oh!" she answered, shortly.

"Although," I went on, hurriedly,

"there is no doubt that his recompense is large."

"I don't think that. I——"

"You mistake me," I corrected.

"The very fact of causing so much thought——"

"To you?" she asked, quickly.

"To us—is a large recompense. If I were——"

"If you were what?" Bella inquired, when I paused. She met my look frankly and smiled. At the same time, she patted the carpet rhythmically with her toe.

"Suppose I put myself in the place of the other one," I said, boldly.

"You might understand my position better," she conceded.

"And his."

"I don't know. You see, I myself do not know what his position is."

"That is distinctly flattering to him—or the reverse."

"You mean——?"

"Exactly. He has either achieved more than you will permit yourself to think—women, in these cases, are like doves plagiarizing ostriches—or the gifts of the gods have fallen, unseen, upon him. Now, I——"

"You?" She looked at me in pretended amazement.

"I am putting myself in the place of the other one."

"Usurpation is a vice."

"A pleasant vice. Now, I am self-indulgent——"

"This is a miracle—a man who knows himself!" she interrupted.

"—and shall at once give myself the better hope."

"That I am an ostrich?"

"That you are afraid to take your head out of the sand."

"And that means?"

"That I am sorry for Carter, and that there is a danger of the extinction of the other one."

"The extinction? I do not understand," she said, so slowly that I knew she did.

"He is in danger of being the one."

"Would it be a danger?"

"Would it?" I echoed. Bella glanced over at the clock ticking softly on the

mantelpiece, and started up in dismay.

"Six o'clock!" she cried, "and I am dining out to-night."

I rose. I confess to a feeling of annoyance. The conversation was growing interesting and might have led anywhere.

"I am sorry," I commenced, stiffly.

"It is a compliment. Time has flown."

"Good-bye," I said, somewhat mol-

lified. "I hope the dinner will be all that is unwholesome and enjoyable at —at—"

"I dine at the Carters'; we go to the opera afterward," she said, looking innocently at me.

"And the other one?" I inquired, despondently.

"Must remain the other one, I am afraid," she answered, regretfully. Then, she added, "And you will come on Friday, Dick?"



NOSTALGIA IN LONDON

AS in a bell-glass of exhausted air,
A mouse is driven to death,
So, in this city, this close-built despair,
We gasp and pant for breath.

Oh, for the granite peaks, the empurpled seas,
The Celts so wild and kind,
Their heathery countries and furze-blossomed leas,
The roar of their sea-wind!

So little satisfies the man who sings!
His tragedy, at best,
Is always longing for old, simple things,
Streams, woodlands, love, or rest!

VICTOR PLARR.



OBLIGING

CRABSHAW—I tell you, your mother can't come here on a visit.

MRS. CRABSHAW—Why can't you be more conciliatory, my dear?

"All right; I'll meet you half-way. You can pay her a visit."



JUST SO

BORROWBY—Let me take you apart for a moment, Grimshaw? I—

GRIMSHAW—No, you don't! It is all I can do to keep body and soul together now.

SONNETS TO A COOK LADY

By Willis Leonard Clanahan

I—A PRAYER

BE with us in the morning. Ere the sun
Arises from his couch, arise from thine,
Imperious being, and upon us shine,
Adorable, but fear-compelling, one!
What shall it be—hot coffee and a bun,
Or battercakes with syrup, lady mine?
Or wilt thou serve us biscuits superfine,
Each hot enough to make the butter run?

Oh, sweet Cook Lady, haste thee with the dishes!
Bring me a knife, a napkin and a plate!
Respect, this once, my terror-stricken wishes,
And save me from the cruel grasp of fate!
The minute-hand around the dial swishes.
Haste! Canst not see I'm certain to be late?

II—RETROSPECTION

It was, if I remember, April first—
Oh, inauspicious time!—when first there beamed
On us thy rugged countenance, which gleamed
With arrogance—oh, trait of all accurst!
With foolish pride, thou wert about to burst;
With breaks grammatical thy language teemed;
That face of thine—can I forget it?—seemed
Of human physiognomies the worst.

But now, behold! thou hast become a treasure,
A *rara avis*, a domestic peach,
A golden pippin, a perennial pleasure,
Whose culinary worth no tongue can teach!
Oh, how we love thee! Words can never measure
The love we bear! Stay with us, we beseech!

III—A CONFESSION

When I was wed, I never dreamed the day
Would ever dawn when I should bow the knee
And truckle to a stranger slavishly,
And never once presume to have my say,
Or run my house according to my way,
Until, sweet one! I advertised for thee!
Now, thou art queen; I am not one-two-three,
But must await in silence thy "O. K."

THE SMART SET

But millions more are cowed the same as I am;
 'Twas ever thus, since Cæsar ruled in Rome.
 I undemonstrative, demure and shy am,
 As unobtrusive as a fay or gnome,
 While thou proclaim'st: "I, Bridget, great and high am,
 Queen regnant of the kitchen, hearth and home!"

IV—EXPLANATION

Remember, sweet, our store of plate is small,
 Our china likewise, and our wealth of spoons;
 They represent the toil of many moons,
 And are, indeed, our precious little all.
 Oh, should'st thou ever let a goblet fall,
 I pray thee, as the very best of boons,
 Preserve the fragments! Gather them eftsoons,
 Nor sweep them heedlessly into the hall.

Yea, save them all—the tiniest of pieces—
 For they, perchance, together may be glued,
 And serve thereafter, when our anger ceases,
 And we are done with imprecations rude.
 They'll have to answer; for our wealth increases
 But slowly, and the store can't be renewed.

V—INFORMATION

My diamond stud is on the dresser, sweet;
 My four-in-hand is just behind the tray;
 My collar, cuff and other buttons may
 Be found near by; my kerchiefs are a treat,
 For they are silk, initialed, new and neat.
 If any of these things in any way
 Will benefit thee, help thyself, I pray,
 Nor blush if I behold them on the street.

Thou art so fair, so lovely and so winning—
 I might say "taking," but the pun were rank—
 And so entranced me, right at the beginning,
 When first my teeth into thy biscuits sank,
 I could not, would not, think of thee as sinning,
 Wert thou to steal the baby's little bank.



SUBSCRIBER—I have called, sir, to make a suggestion about your magazine.
 EDITOR—Well, sir, what is it?

"I wish you wouldn't insert reading matter of your own among the advertisements. It takes away so from the interest!"



TWO are a couple; three, a divorce.

MUSICIANS AS LOVERS

By Rupert Hughes

OF COURSE, as you were just going to quote, Shakespeare said, "If music be the food of love." But, then, you must not fail to remember that, in another play, he hedged by saying, "Much virtue in an 'if.'" For music is not the food of love, any more than is oatmeal, or watermelons. And yet, in a sense, music is a love-food—in the sense, I mean, in which there is love-nourishment in tubes of paint, which can perpetuate your beauty, my fair reader; or in ink-bottles, all ebon with Portuguese sonnets and erotic rondeaux; or in tubs of plaster of Paris, or in bargain-counterfuls of dress goods. In such a sense, indeed, there is *materia amorifica* in music, for with music one can—or, at least, one did—show forth the very rhythm of *Tristan's* desire; and another portrayed, in unexpurgated harmonies, the garden-mood of *Faust* and *Marguerite*.

But, as there are, in those same tubes of oozy paint, horrific visions like Franz Stuck's "War," or portraits of plutocrats by Bonnat, and as there are, in ink-bottles, sad potencies of tailor's bills and dramatic criticisms; so it is possible, under the name of music, to write fugues, and five-finger exercises, and yet more settings of "Hiawatha," or "*Du bist wie eine Blume*."

Now, there is only one thing easier than a generalization, and that is a generalization in the opposite direction. You can prove anything by statistics, if you are permitted to choose your statistics, and to stop when you wish. But statistics are

stubborn as automobiles. And sometimes, if you hitch yourself to a statistic, you meet the fate of the farmer who put his head in the yoke with the skittish steer.

There was a time when I could have written you an essay on the moral effect of music, and have been convinced—if not convincing. A little later, I could have done no worse with a thesis to the effect that music is an immoral influence. But now, after much study, that time is past. For, to repeat, with a few statistics, you can prove anything; with a complete array, you can prove nothing, or its next-door neighbor.

The way to test any food is to observe its effects on those addicted to it. To study the true workings of music, then, you would not count the pulse of one of those "Oh-I'm-passionately-fond-of-music" maidens, who talk all through any music, even dance-music; nor would you take for your test one of those laymen who like this tune or that, because it reminds them of the first time they heard it—"that night when Sally Perkins sang it, while I was out on the moonlit piazza with Kitty Gray, now Mrs. van Van."

These are people to whom music is as much a rarity as Nesselrode to a newsboy. The true place to test the effect of music is in the souls of the people who live in it, breathe it, steep themselves in it, play it, and, what is worse, work it.

To the great musicians themselves, then, let us turn. What could be better for the purpose than to make these parade before us in historic

mardi-gras, wearing their hearts on their sleeves?

A motley crew they make, and you, perhaps, may be able to find a unity, if not of purpose, at least of result, in the music they have made, and the music that has made them. Here they come! Watch them well!

Leading the rout are those stately or capering figures who, from being the great virtuosi of their time, were finally idolized into gods in the golden age, when musical critics had no columns in which to perpetuate their iconoclasms.

Mark him with the stately stride, Apollo, smiting his lyre with a majesty hardly supported by the seven small notes he could win from it. The gossips said he loved Daphne, and madly withal. When she took to a tree, he adored Coronis, but punished her with death. He was not much of a lover—less than was Mercury, who made the lyre out of a cast-off tortoise-shell. The great god, Pan, was uncouth and violent, and frightened more than he charmed, even of those old-time chorus girls, the nymphs. Arion loved only himself, and was a born bachelor; but Orpheus loved once, and with a whole soul that defied death and hell. So, here, among the gods and fathers of ancient music, we have a confusing beginning of precedents. I fear we shall find little more definite among the historical figures that follow.

Note, especially, the cluster of those wonderful men who, at the end of the Middle Ages, went from Flanders and thereabouts, into Italy and throughout Europe, weaving their Flemish counterpoint like a net all over the world of music. They seem to have been "marrying men," some of them super-romantic, others as stodgily domestic and workaday as any village blacksmith.

There is Marc Houtermann, called the prince of musicians, who lived at Brussels, and died there, aged forty. He was followed to his grave the same year by his musically named Joanna Gavadia, who knew music well and, let us hope, died of a broken heart.

Cipriano de Rore, de Croes and Jacques Buus were all married men, and begot "hostages to fortune." Phillipe de Monte may, or may not, have married; we know only that a girl pupil of his wrote him a Latin poem, forty-six lines long; we can but trust that he did not marry her.

Orlando di Lasso, "one of the morning stars of modern times," whose music was so beautiful that once, at Munich, a thunderstorm was miraculously hushed at the first note of one of his motets, lived a love-life much like Schumann's, save that he seems to have had no hard-hearted parents to trouble him. He found his fate at the court of Munich, where his Regina was a maid of honor. She bore him six children, and they lived ideally; but his health gave way, now and then, before his hard work, and, finally, when he had reached his three-score and ten, the wife came home one day to find him gone mad, unable even to recognize her, who had been at his side for thirty years. She guarded him tenderly, and strove hard to cheer his last days, but Melancholy surrendered him only to Death.

Adrien Willaert had a wife whom he loved long and well, and he wrote many wills, in which he grew more and more affectionate toward his helpmeet; yet, strangely, he never mentioned his daughter, who was herself a composer, and had, perhaps, a romance of her own, down there in *Juliet's* country, where her Flemish father took her.

How different was the domestic life of Jacques de Wert, whose wife conspired against him, and put his life in danger! When he was well rid of this baggage, he fell into an intrigue with a lady of the court of Ferrara. Her name was Tarquinia Molza, and she was a poetess; but her relatives frowned upon the alliance of her poetry and his music, and forced her to go back to her mother at Mantua, where she outlived de Wert some twenty-seven years. His is such a life as one would take to prove the unsettling effects of music.

Yet, what shall we say, then, of Josse Boutmy, who lived ninety-nine years, and reared twelve children, spending the greater part of his life with his faithful spouse in one long struggle against poverty, one eternal drudgery for the pence necessary to educate his family? Shall we not say that he was as truly influenced by music as Jacques de Wert?

De Wert had gone to Italy as a boy, and one might blame those soft Italian skies for his amorous troubles. But, then, one encounters such a life as that of Palestrina, spent altogether in Italy. At an early age, he married a girl named Lucrezia, and their life seems to have been one of perfect devotion. She bore him four sons, and stood by him in all his troubles, the twilight star of his poverty, and adorning that high noon of his glory, when the Pope himself turned to Palestrina, and implored him to reform and rescue the whole music of the Church from its corruptions. It was well that Lucrezia could offer him solace, for, unwittingly, she had once brought him his direst distress. An earlier Pope had admitted him to the choir, in spite of three vital objections: first, that he was not a priest; second, that he was a married man; and third, that he could not sing. One day, there was a new Pope, and, without warning, he threw Palestrina and three other composers upon the world, as married scandals in the sacred college of singers. Palestrina was poor, and four little children needed bread and clothes. The shock unnerved him utterly, and he fell sick of a fever, that had been mortal if Lucrezia had not nursed him well. When he recovered, a better post was offered him, and things ran smoothly till, twenty-five years later, Lucrezia died, leaving him broken-hearted, with only one worthless son to embitter the last fourteen years of his widowed life. His most poignantly impressive motets seem to have been written under the anguish of Lucrezia's death. The finest of them is his setting of the words:

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,
When we remembered thee, O Zion;
As for our harps, we hanged them up upon
the trees that are therein,

which, as has been said, "may well have represented, to himself, the heart-broken composer, mourning by the banks of the Tiber for the lost wife whom he had loved so long."

Close upon so noble a career, artistic and personal, comes that of Georges de la Hèle, who, being a priest, gave up a lucrative benefice to wed the woman of his desire. And yet again, with disconcerting effect, comes the career of Ambrosio de Cotes, a priest who was both a gambler and a drunkard, who kept a mistress, and was rebuked, publicly, for howling indecent refrains to the tunes in church. Which of these is fairly typical as a musician?

Then comes the most notable man in all English music, Henry Purcell, who wrote the best love-songs that ever melted the reserve of his race. He must have been a good husband and his married life a happy one, if we are to judge by his wife's devotion to his memory, for she celebrated him, in a memorial volume, as the "Orpheus of Great Britain," and she was eager that the two surviving sons should be trained to music.

And, speaking of types, what shall we say of this cloud of witnesses, bearing the most honored name in music, the name of Bach?

There were more than twenty-five Bachs, who made themselves names as men of music, and they earned themselves almost as great names as family-makers—all except Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, who was as lacking in virtue as he was rich in virtuosity. He was notoriously immoral; yet he was the greatest organist of his time, as his father had been before him. And it is his father, Johann Sebastian Bach, who, by his life and preëminence in music, offers the biggest obstacle to any theory about the immoral influence of the art. For, surely, if he, who is generally called the greatest of musicians, led a life of hardly

equaled domesticity, it will not be easy to claim that music has an unsettling effect upon society. Yet, there are his great rivals, Händel and Beethoven, whose careers are in the remotest possible contrast. But let them take their turn in the pageant, while we observe the procedure of "Father Bach."

Though his son was such a besotted rake, and his uncle had been sued for breach of promise, and had refused to marry the girl, in spite of the order of the court, the great Johann Sebastian Bach took his love-affairs very seriously, and his chief dissipation seems to have been the introduction of lawless modulations in his church music, for which he was rebuked by the authorities. There is, in the record of this reproof, an allusion to the fact that, "he had allowed that stranger maiden to show herself, and to make music in the choir," and there is much speculation as to who this fascinating mystery could have been. But, as Bach said that, "he had spoken to the parson about her," the romance loses its excitement. A few years later, he married a relative, "the virtuous maiden, Maria Barbara Bach," and the chief recorded trouble of their existence together was an intermittent struggle with the house rent. Maria Barbara does not seem to have been especially musical, but the sons she bore him rivaled their father's fame. When he had been married thirteen years, Bach went on a journey with the prince whose musical director he was. Those who believe in the potency of numbers will find substantial proof here, for, when Bach returned to his family, he found his wife was not only dead, but buried. Bach's father had remarried, after only seven months of widowhood, but Bach himself stood it for a year and a half; then he married a very musical girl, who bore him thirteen children, none of whom was especially musical. The wedded life of this couple seems to have been of the greatest felicity, though Bach acquired a reputation for being dictatorial—with twenty children

about his knee, there was, no doubt, some necessity of being a martinet. Schumann, too, who also made his home life happy, was very dictatorial; and we have seen, in the play, "*Die Heimath*," how much *Magda's* father was doted upon by his wife, tyrant though he was. Perhaps, that is the secret of wedded bliss.

But Bach could unbend and relax his dignity, and his life with Anna Magdalene Wülken, the daughter of the court trumpeter, was one of sturdy good cheer, with incessant music. As Bach once declared, his family formed a concert, both vocal and instrumental, and music was their life, as it was their livelihood. Bach wrote compositions and rules in thoroughbass for his wife, and there exists, in her own handwriting, a transposition of a song, upon the joys of tobacco. This, we may believe, she transposed to suit "that very clear soprano" which gave him such contentment. They also kept a book, meant to be an antidote to melancholy. It contained compositions by the husband, and they were copied by both Sebastian and his Magdalene. Bach's wife was twelve years his junior, and the pair had twenty-eight years of wedded peace, before the inevitable came, and brought, first blindness, then death.

It is neither here nor there, that Bach, dying, left little money and many children, and that the sons seized upon his manuscripts, and drifted away to other cities, leaving the mother and three daughters to live upon the charity of the town. But it is unfortunate to have to include among the ungrateful children the stepson, Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach, who seems, otherwise, to have been a pleasant fellow and a great composer. At the first, he eclipsed his father's fame; later, he has been eclipsed thereby.

Another family, almost as famed as the Bachs, was the group of violin-makers of Cremona, the Stradivari. The founder of the house, Antonio, began his life romantically enough. When he was a youngster of seventeen or eighteen, he fell in love with Fran-

cesca Capra, the widow of a man who had been assassinated. She was nine or ten years older than Stradivari, and bore him six children. Two of his sons took up their father's trade; both of them died bachelors; the third son became a priest. At the age of fifty-eight, Francesca died. After a year of widowhood, Antonio wedded again—this time, a woman fourteen or fifteen years younger than he. She bore him five children, and he outlived her less than a year. His descendants dwelt for generations at Cremona, flourishing on his fame.

But, now, lest we should believe too firmly that music exerts an amorous and domestic effect, we are confronted with the ponderous majesty of one of the proudest spirits that ever strode the creaking earth, Georg Friedrich Händel, who was born the very same year as the much-married Bach, but led a life as different as day is from night. The first snub Händel dealt to Cupid was when, at the age of eighteen, he sought the post of organist, formerly held by the famous old Buxtehude. Buxtehude had left behind him a daughter thirty-four years old. Händel could have had the position, had he been willing to have the girl. But she was almost twice his age, and he refused the opportunity. Then, he went to Italy, where he was pursued in vain by a beautiful and brilliant Italianne, whom, also, he spurned. But, when in England, he came very near falling in love with two different women. The mother of the first objected to him as a mere fiddler. After the mother died, the father invited him into the family, only to be told that the invitation came too late. The other woman, a lady of high degree, offered herself as a substitute for his career, only to be declined with thanks, and, possibly, with a formal statement, that, "rejection implied no lack of merit." Seeing that these things happened in the eighteenth century, I need not add that both women were romantic enough to go into a decline, and to die with neatness and despatch.

Whatever food music may have been to Händel's greatness, there was another food that equaled it in his esteem—the symphonic poetry of the cook.

In this, he was rivaled by the father of French opera, Lully, who was a gourmand, in spite of the fact that he spent his early life as a kitchen boy. Lully led his wife a miserable existence on account of his hot temper, his brutality and his excesses in solid and liquid fare. After him came Rameau, who, like Stradivari, fell in love with a widow, while he was still in his teens, and she well out of hers. He did not wed, however, until he was forty-three, and then he married an eighteen-year-old girl, who was a good woman, and made her husband very happy. But he was taciturn and rarely spoke, even to his own family; moreover, he spent on them even less of money than of words.

These, and others, make a rather sordid and unromantic group. But, now, there stalks forth, to confound all our theories, the superb figure of Gluck, who fell in love but once, and then for all time, with Maria Anna Pergin, who loved him. Her mother approved of him, but the purse-proud father despised him for a musician.

The lovers accepted the rebuff as a temporary sorrow only, and Providence, like an amateur author, removed the stern parent, the next year. Gluck flew back from Italy to Vienna, to his betrothed, with whom, till his death, he dwelt in happiest wedlock. She went with him on his triumphal tours, and spent her wealth in charities. They had no children of their own, but adopted a niece. The devoted wife used to play her husband's accompaniments as he sang his own music, and, when he died, he took especial pains that she should be his sole and exclusive heir, even leaving to her pleasure whether his brothers and sisters should have anything, or not.

Plainly, we should be thinking that music has a purifying, ennobling and substantial effect upon society—if, only, Gluck's friend and partisan, the successful composer and immortal

writer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, would not intrude upon the picture, with his faun-like paganisms and magnificently shameless "Confessions."

Jostling elbows with him, comes Gluck's chief rival, Piccinni, one of the most beautiful characters in history. He was a man who could wage a mortal combat in art, without bitterness toward his bitter rivals. When Gluck died, Piccinni strove to organize a memorial festival in his honor, and, when another rival, Sacchini, was taken from the arena by death, Piccinni delivered the funeral eulogy. This Sacchini, by the way, was a reckless voluptuary. He seems never to have married.

But Piccinni was the very beau-ideal of a father and a husband. He and his wife, who was a singer of exquisite skill, and a teacher of ability, gave little home concerts, which were events. They and their many children went through more vicissitudes than have fallen to the lot of many musicians; but, always, they loved one another and their art, and there always remains that picture which the Prince of Brunswick stumbled upon, when he knocked at Piccinni's door, and found him rocking the cradle of one of his children, while another tugged at his coat in boisterous fun, and the mother beamed her enjoyment.

Hardly less ideal, though far more picturesque and dramatic, was the romance of Mozart. This golden-hearted genius was a composer at an age when many children have not commenced to learn their A B C's; he was a virtuoso before the time when most boys can be trusted with a blunt knife. Kissed and fondled by great beauties, from the age of five, it is small wonder that Mozart began to improvise precociously upon the oldest theme in the world. His first recorded love-affair is found in letters written at the age of thirteen. He loved with the same radiant enthusiasm that he gave to his music, and, while some of his flirtations were of the utmost frivolity, such as his hilarious courtship of his

pretty cousin, the "Basle," he was capable of the completest altruism, and could turn aside from the aristocracy to lavish his idolatry upon the fifteen-year-old daughter of a poor music-copyist, whose wife took in boarders. For this girl, Aloysia Weber, he wished to give up his own career as a concert pianist; he wished to abandon the conquest of Paris, which he had planned, to devote himself to the training of her voice, and to the writing of operas for her exploitation.

Mozart's autocratic father raised such a storm that the youth was driven away to Paris, arriving there in the very midst of the Gluck and Piccinni feud. Doubtless, because of loneliness for his far-away Aloysia, and on account of the death of his mother, who had gone to Paris with him, he hated the city and its denizens, and, in return, he made little impression there. At last, he hastened back to his Aloysia, only to find that she had changed, and now cared nothing for him. With the bravado of his own *Don Giovanni*, he turned to the piano, and chanted, gaily, "Gladly I give up the girl that gives up me." Then, he went to the house of a friend, and wept for days.

I have already likened Providence to an amateur author, and the justice of the reproach is evidenced in the amateurish and unconvincing plot through which the Fates sent Mozart. For, after breaking his heart over the gifted and beautiful woman who became a successful prima donna, he did an impossible thing, which could never happen in first-class fiction—he sought his consolation in the arms and in the heart of Aloysia's younger sister, who was not especially pretty, and was only modestly musical. But her name was Constanze, and she lived up to the name.

One can imagine the frenzied indignation of that autocratic old father, when, in the midst of his rejoicings over the fortunate fickleness of Aloysia, he heard rumors that his scapegrace son was the talk of all Vienna for his

devotion to the younger sister. If your imagination be not powerful enough to cope with the old man's angry thoroughness of expression, you can find it printed, and also the solemn, eloquent letters with which the young Mozart pleaded for his father's consent. Failing to secure it, he fought his way, through numberless obstacles, to a pathetic runaway match. Even Constanze's mother took a hand in the trouble, and threatened legal action, until poor Mozart's marriage degenerated into a sort of race between the priest and the policeman. And, once the pair were married, all the trials which their most candid friends could have predicted, came swarming upon them. Poverty was a caller, and she "brought her knitting."

But what cared those two, indeed! Constanze could always read to Mozart, and tell him stories, as he liked to have her do while he composed. And she could cut up his meat for him, lest, in his absent-mindedness, he carve off one of his valuable fingers. And, when she was ill, as she frequently was, there could be no gentler nurse than he. Besides, when the Winter was upon them, it was no Winter of discontent, for, if the fire gave out, and fuel could not be afforded, could they not always waltz together?

Twice, Mozart made concert tours for money, and, twice, he came home poorer than he went. But, at least, he left the world some of the gentlest and most hearty love-letters in its literature. When he was at home, Vienna was busy with anecdotes of his devotion. He was, indeed, so good a husband that Constanze could not withhold forgiveness for certain occasions when he strayed from the narrow path of absolute fidelity; for she knew that his heart had its home with her. When he died, supposedly of malignant typhus, she tried to catch his disease, and die with him; and her health broke so completely that she could not attend his funeral. Alas! when she had recovered suffi-

ciently to visit the cemetery, she could not discover—nor has any one since—in just what three-deep pauper's grave Mozart was buried.

Eighteen years she mourned him, paying his debts and publishing his works. Finally, a Danish gentleman offered her his hand and the money to educate her two boys. Then, the unconventional author of Mozart's fortunes arranged the most impossible part of the plot, for Constanze's second husband wrote a long biography of her first, and in it included many anecdotes of his strength and sweetness of soul. All in all, in spite of a certain fickleness, in which this immortal musician has been surpassed by lovers in all walks of life, from blacksmiths to bishops, music has here created one of the tenderest, most honest of all romances.

But there was a man whose life encompassed Mozart's, as a long brace encompasses a stave of music—Joseph Haydn. He was born twenty-four years before Mozart, and died eighteen years after him. And this man's love-affairs were of an altogether different fabric. While Mozart died in poverty, at thirty-five, Haydn, dying at seventy-seven, was worried over the endowment he should leave to a discarded mistress, whose name, strangely enough, was Aloysia. And Haydn, more than strangely enough, had begun his life by proposing to an older sister, and marrying a younger—but with results how unlike those in Mozart's life!

Haydn, too, found his inamorata in the home of a poor man. At twenty-eight, being then little troubled with the ghastly poverty that had hounded him, he proposed to the daughter of a wig-maker, but she chose a convent, instead. When one reads a description of the multiplicity of Haydn's uglinesses, her choice cannot be regarded as altogether unwise. At her father's shrewd suggestion, Haydn married the younger sister, and she led him a dog's life. The only interest she seemed to have in his music was to keep him writing numbers for the priests, who clustered around her,

eating Haydn out of house and home. Frau Haydn was a shrew, and he finally gave up trying to live at home, seeking his consolation at court with a young and beautiful Neapolitan singer, who was unhappily married to a poor fiddler, named Polzelli. The two lovers made little secret of their hope that one, or both, of their ill-mated spouses, might pass away. But the obstinate spouses declined thus to "die by request."

After a time, circumstances took the lovers apart, until, finally, Aloysia married again, though, to the last, she held Haydn to an agreement he had made years before, to marry no other woman, and to leave her a pension. Meanwhile, in London, Haydn was having a quaint alliance, *sub rosa*, with a widow, he being sixty years old. His own wife was demanding from him money to buy a little home, which, she politely hinted, was just the right size for a widow. Haydn bought the house, but dwelt in it himself, as a widower. His letters to the English woman are not preserved, but he kept all of hers to him, and these we have. They are full of gentle idolatry. She had been writing these to him while he had been writing ardent letters of yearning to the Polzelli. Altogether, Haydn does not shine as the beau-ideal of single-hearted fidelity.

Was it from him that Beethoven caught his own fickleness, along with so much of his musical manner? Beethoven had one of the busiest hearts in history. We cannot say that he might not have been a marrying man, if disease and deafness had not harrowed his volcanic soul. His afflictions made his life one of tempestuous tragedy, in which he wandered through the world, and found it as homeless and as bleak to him as it was to *King Lear*, whose quarrels with fate were no more fierce, more majestic, or more vain, than Beethoven's. Among the multitudinous agonies that throng his letters, and rave through his music, are many cries of wild longing for a

home-life in a woman's heart. But these "diminished sevenths" of unrest and yearning are often resolved in a cold minor of resignation or of cynicism, in which he claims to be willing, and, at times, even glad to pass his life alone. Yet, we are not justified in taking Beethoven as a man of domestic inclinations. The most confirmed bachelors have their moments of doubt, and Beethoven had every qualification for driving a wife even madder than he himself could be, on occasions. His most intimate and unswerving friends were the victims of spasms of suspicion, hatred and maltreatment, that, surely, no wife worth having could ever have endured through the honeymoon.

And yet, in his love-letters, there is a notable absence of jealousy or whim, and we can only accept his life as we find it, and regard him as a great genius who rushed from love to love, and never tarried for wedlock. As to the quality of those love-affairs, we meet a conflict of authority; some of his friends record him as a wonder of chastity, while others treat him as a never-tiring flirt. Just to catalogue his sweethearts, takes no little space. First is Babette von Keglevics; then come Jeanette d'Honrath, Fraülein Westerhold, and "Lorchen," who knitted him an Angola waistcoat that made him weep; then the Countess Charlotte of Brunswick, and Magdalena Willmann, who refused him, she said, "because he was very ugly and half crazy." Next was the fair and high-born Julie von Vering, who finally chose his friend, and died a year later. Next, he proposed in vain to the "volatile" Thérèse von Malfatti; and he loved her cousin, the Baroness Gleichenstein; and Fraülein Roeckel, who married Hummel. Then came the Countess Erdödy, who watched over him, took him into her house as a guest, and bribed a servant to attend him, until she found him so impossible and restless that she had to let him go, though she erected a temple to his honor in her park.

"The nut-brown Berlin maid," Amalie Seebald, won much ardor and many letters. A Bremen lass, Elisa Müller, sent him letters and presents, and he had an "Autumnal love-affair" with Frau Koschak. He was caught in the web of Bettina Brentano, and her mysterious letters include passionate avowals from Beethoven. Then, there were the three daughters of a Viennese tailor, and Dorothea Cecilia Ertmann, a baroness, and at least six countesses and two princesses, besides the beautiful, and beautifully named, Giulietta Guicciardi, to whom he dedicated his "Moonlight Sonata." She, too, like all his other sweethearts, married some one else, a ballet-music composer, who borrowed money of Beethoven. Giulietta seems to have regretted her step, for she visited Beethoven, and wept before him; but she could not melt his scorn. As he wrote of her, "She loved me well, and more than her husband; but I despise her." It is this Giulietta who was long credited with being the woman to whom Beethoven wrote that famous triple letter, of thrice-ardent passion, "The Eternal Belov'd" ("*Die unsterbliche Geliebte*"). But it is now known that it was written to her cousin, the Countess Thérèse von Brunswick. This was one of the women he really longed to marry. It was the thought of such a heart as hers that could make him cry out, in his forty-sixth year, "Love, and love alone, can give me a happy life. Oh, God, let me find her who will keep me in the path of virtue, the one I may rightly call my own."

But, for all this yearning, we cannot accept Beethoven as even potentially a Benedick. Among the thirty or more women who accepted his attentions, he could easily have found a wife, had he been at heart a marrying man. He has perpetuated, in his dedications, all these flames, and it was in the furnace of them that much of his music was forged.

But how shall we blame, or praise,

music for its effect upon Beethoven's heart, in the face of the antipodal life of such a fellow-bachelor as Händel? And to these two bachelors there belongs a third great bachelor of music, Schubert, who is said never to have loved a woman. The cautious dismiss as fables even the paltry anecdote, or two, of his hopeless love for a very young countess. Schubert was a pauper to the *nth* degree, but he found his joy in the hilarity of the Vienna cafés with boisterous friends, working up immortal enthusiasms on much art and a little beer. He seems never to have cared for women, and never to have been cared for by them.

There are all sorts of bachelorhoods, and there is a wide distinction between the womanless splendor of Händel's life at court, and the unilluminated garret of Schubert's obscurity. There is a difference, also, in the busy, promiscuous courtships of Beethoven, who dedicated thirty-nine compositions to thirty-six women, and those of Chopin, who, though he could conduct three flirtations of an evening, seems to have loved but thrice, and to have planned marriage but once.

Chopin, only half-Polish, and finding his true home in Paris, had been loved by the tiny musicienne, hardly so big as her name, Leopoldine Blahetka. But his first true love was for the raving beauty, Constantia Gladkowska, whom he mourned in prose as highly colored as his nocturnes, wishing that, after his death, his ashes might be strewn under her feet. She married another. The Polish Maria Wodzinska was his next flame, and he wished to marry her. But he, who had the salons of Paris at his princely behest, could not win this nineteen-year-old girl. Then, he fell into the embrace of George Sand, that mysterious sphinx of the commodious heart, who held him as with claws. But, at length, it was the sphinx herself who struggled for release from the hold of the fretful genius, whom consumption was claiming. Every one knows all there is to know about the

Chopin-Sand affair—all and a great deal more; but who could draw from it any inference as to the effect of music? George Sand was attracted to Chopin by his art; with her as nurse, his genius accomplished much of its greatest work, and it held her enthralled, for a time. To Chopin, music was both a medicine and a disease, a torment and solace. But he would have lived the same life essentially, had he been a painter, a poet, an architect, a man of affairs, or an idler, with the same effeminate nature, the same elegance of manner, the same disease, the same women about him. Is it not the man, and the environment, rather than the music, that makes such a life what it is?

There is another brilliant consumptive, Carl Maria von Weber, a member of a long line of musicians. His uncle was the father of Mozart's wife. At seventeen, he had formed "a tender connection with a lady of position," whom he lost sight of later, and forgot, in the race with fast young noblemen, whose dissipations he rivaled. A mad entanglement with a singer ruined him in purse, and almost in career. His frivolities ended in an arrest and exile, which sobered him with the abruptness of a plunge into a stream of icy water. His gaiety was as irrepressible as Chopin's melancholy, and he gave Germany some of its most cheerful music. His heart was restless, and, at the age of twenty-seven, he was writhing in an infatuation for a worthless ballet-girl. Then, his affection for a singer and soubrette, Caroline Brandt, steadied him, and, after a long period of effort to establish a firm position, he married her, and the soubrette became a *Hausfrau*. He was thirty-one, however, before this point was reached, and the honeymoon consisted of a concert tour. The glory of his later life fought against the gloom of his disease, but the ferocious rake now made an ideal husband and father, and his letters to his wife were full of ardor. It was Weber's fate to die alone in London, in the midst of eager preparations and

vast hunger to reach his home. He was not quite forty when he died, and his life had been two lives, one of unchecked libertinism, the other all integrity of purpose. But it was in the latter half that he wrote his best music.

The domestic and home-establishing influences of music might be pleaded, even more strongly, from the life of Mendelssohn. A more musical home than that in which Mendelssohn grew up, could hardly exist, or one in which family life reached a higher level of comfort and delight. Like Mozart, Mendelssohn was especially devoted to his sister. Her death, indeed, grieved him so deeply that he died shortly after. A man of the utmost cheer and of wholesome life, reveling in dancing, swimming, riding, sketching and billiards, he was idolized in the circle around him, though his life was not without its enmities. He had many slight flirtations, yet seems never to have been engaged but once—to Cécile Jeanrenaud, whom he married. His home life with her was a repetition of that ideal circle in his father's house. His references to the charm he found in the society of his wife and children, gleam through his many and brilliantly written letters. A busier life, or a more pleasantly respectable one, can hardly be found in the history of men, nor yet a more truly musical.

A life of similar brilliance and similar musical immersion was that of Liszt, whose domestic career was, nevertheless, as different as possible. A soul of greater generosity, and of more zealous altruism, it would be hard to find, and yet his relations to women were, in the conventional view, a colossal and multifarious scandal. Have we any more right to blame his domestic outrages to the music that was in him than to the almost equally intense religious ardor that fought for him, leading him, again and again, to seek to enter a monastery, and at last actually to take orders? Abelard was a sufficiently tempestuous and irregular lover, yet he was

a priest, and not a musician. Can we then blame harmony and melody for the humming-bird amours of the Abbé Liszt—for the many women he made material love to from his early youth, for the very dubious honesty of his bearing toward the Comtesse d'Agoult, and toward the Princess Wittgenstein, with whom he debated the formalities of marriage without hesitating over the actualities?

There is a strange cluster of domestic infelicities centering about Liszt. The Comtesse d'Agoult loved him so ardently that she braved the world for him, driving even her complacent husband to divorce her; but, even then, though they lived together, Liszt did not marry her. He even brought George Sand, the ex-mistress of so many men, including Liszt himself, to live at the house with the countess, who had borne him three children out of wedlock. One of these children became the wife of Hans von Bülow, who was driven to divorce her, that she might marry his teacher, Richard Wagner, whose first wife had endured twenty-five years of his irregularities—irregularities, that is, in everything except poverty—and only separated from him during the last five years of her life. Shall we blame all this to music? and, if so, shall we say that music has atoned sufficiently in the devotion of Wagner and his second wife to each other, and their lofty theories of art? And, in any case, how shall we explain the influence of music in the life of Wagner's rival for supremacy, Johannes Brahms, a confirmed bachelor; or his other contemporary, Tschai-kowsky, who, after a normal love-affair with a singer, Désirée Artôt, who jilted him, eventually married a girl by whom he seems to have been deeply loved, without his feeling any affection for her in return. He claimed to have explained to the enamoured girl that he would marry her if she wished, but that he could not love her. On these terms, she accepted him, and the bridegroom endured all the agonies of heart ordinar-

ily ascribed to bartered brides. A burlesque honeymoon of a week was soon followed by a separation. Tschai-kowsky regarded his wife with a terror bordering on insanity, finding what little consolation life had for him in the devotion of a widow, who furnished him liberally with funds and admiration, and had for him an affection which, for lack of better information, we can only call platonic.

There are other musicians into whose private affairs I have not searched. There is no lack of curious entanglements, especially among the men and women who have played upon the human voice; but I have surely spread out enough samples for forming a judgment, especially when we have turned an additional glance upon the life of one other composer.

The influence of music might be modified beyond recognition by the fact that one of the lovers was not musical. But, surely, where both man and woman are professional musicians, there can be no doubt of the governing power of music. In recent history, there is one eminent composer who married a woman also prominent in music. In fact, Clara Wieck has been called "the most eminent woman who ever took up music as a profession;" and it would be hard to deny Robert Schumann a place among the major gods of creative art. Every one knows how he began to love Clara, and she him, when he was first leaving his teens, and she entering her fame as an eleven-year-old prodigy. Their fidelity through the storm and stress of their courtship, their lifelong sympathy and collaboration in maintaining a humanly perfect home, and in achieving a dual immortality, both as lovers and as musicians—these certainly indicate music as a solidifying and enriching force in society.

So now, finally, in the procession that has filed past you, you have seen almost every imaginable form of love and lover, of husband and celibate, of Lothario and woman-hater. There have been cool-blooded bachelors like Händel, Schubert and Brahms; there

have been passionate pilgrims like Chopin, Beethoven and Liszt, who loved many women, and married none. There have been the home-keeping breeders of children and contentment, such as Willaert, Orlando di Lasso, Palestrina, the Bachs, Gluck, Piccinni, Weber, Mendelssohn and Schumann. There have been the unhappily wed, who, through the fault of themselves or their wives, found, and made, misery at home, and sought nepenthe elsewhere, such as Haydn, Berlioz and Tschai-kowsky. There have been married lives of other natures, neither failure nor success, such as the careers of Lully, Rameau, Stradivari and Wagner.

If there lives any one who can extract from this medley a theory as to the effect of music upon the human heart, a theory that will satisfy himself alone, to say nothing of the world in general, he is welcome to his conclusion. To me, it is a chaos, through which I cannot pretend to trace any thread of unity. I can only fall back upon this agnosticism: If any man claim that music has a moral influence on life, I shall barricade his path with some of the most brilliant rascals in domestic chronicle; and, equally, if any man deny that music has a moral effect, I shall hurl at his

head some of the most beautiful lives that have ever bloomed upon earth.

The long and the short of it is, perhaps, that music, being a universal art, like a universal watch-key, will set going the complicated cogs and springs of every soul, and yet not regulate or assure the rhythm. Music stimulates and satisfies the mind in any of its whims. You can tune it to a softly chanted prayer, or a dance-orgy; to a hymn of exultation, or a tinkling serenade; to a kindergarten song, or the blood-thirst of armies; to voluptuous desires that cannot, or dare not, be worded, or raptures distilled of every human dross; to cynical raillery, or the throb of a young lover's heart; to the hilarity of a drinking-song, or the midnight elegy of ineffable despair. How is such an art as this to compel, or to deny, anything or anybody?

Musicians, then, are only ordinary clay, who happened to make music, instead of other things of more or less beauty or value. They are ordinary puppets of circumstance, and of inner and outer environment, who might have been happier, and might have been unhappier, with the women they wed, had those women died younger or lived longer; or with other women; or with none at all.



CORRECTED PROVERBS

MONEY Money makes right.

~~Money~~ 4-11-44 is the best policy.

A fair face is half a ~~pink~~ powder.

Stolen fruits are ~~sweeter~~ often costliest.

Abstinence (from medicine) is the best medicine.

What man has (been) done, man can('t) do again.

'Tis a long lane that has no ~~turning~~ saloon.

He who says nothing ~~never~~ often lies the most.

When the pear is ripe, it falls--the small boy gets it.

He makes no friends who never made a ~~ten~~ dollar.

When the wine is run out, ~~you lose the lead~~ get more.

~~Never~~ Give advice unasked (or you'll never give it).

Those who live in glass houses should ~~not show their backs~~ move.

Fools and madmen ought ~~not~~ to be left in their own company.

That which we acquire with most difficulty ~~is worth the effort~~ is often the least valuable.

JOHN ELIOT.

THE THIRD ELOPEMENT

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

“NO honeymoon!” Sybil echoed John Thorpe’s words with a sort of wondering admiration.

“Yes,” her future husband answered her, “I would prefer that there be no honeymoon, now. Later, we can take one, wherever you wish.”

Sybil smiled, faintly. “As you will,” she said, and dismissed the question.

“Mr. John Thorpe and Lady Sybil Thorpe are at Claridge’s.” The newspaper announcement was singularly short and brief. London stirred in an interested way. Married only three days ago, and back in London already! That was hardly the way with ordinary brides and grooms. But Sybil was an unusual woman—a most unusual woman; anything might be expected of her.

“There is some money for you down at the Borne Bank,” John Thorpe told his wife. “I just deposited a sum which would have covered our honeymoon expenses. You may do with it as you like.” John Thorpe was singularly businesslike, even in his dealings with his wife. But, then, what can one expect of a man whose whole life has been spent in the financial atmosphere of the City, where every shilling is accurately entered in one of the big ledgers, over which painstaking clerks toil daily?

“Thanks,” Sybil answered. She sealed a letter she had just written, and tossed it in the basket on her desk.

“You don’t know how glad I am that you didn’t wish a honeymoon,” she said to him. “London suits me so much better! Here, I have friends.

You are engrossed with matters on ’Change. If we had gone wandering over Europe, with the usual crowd of tourists and idlers, we’d have grown tired of each other; of that I am certain. Here, we do not see enough of each other to grow weary.”

“But you know, Sybil,” Thorpe broke in, “it is only that beastly deal in Kaffirs that kept me from leaving town. I had to be in touch with the market. And we should not have grown tired of each other on the honeymoon; that I know.”

Sybil smiled, tentatively. Thorpe read her meaning differently. He thought that she simply craved an expression of affection, whereas Sybil was singularly and earnestly sincere in what she said. Really, she had not desired a honeymoon. She felt that she would have been insufferably bored in the first week.

It was only a week after her marriage that Sybil drove to the church, where she had been married, to witness the wedding of her cousin, the Honorable Dorothy Flagg.

“For heaven’s sake, Dot,” she whispered to the bride, “make him cut the honeymoon short; you’ll thank me if you do.”

Dorothy shrugged her shoulders. She was marrying for love—so she thought; Sybil had married for money.

After the ceremony, Sybil trailed down the aisle to her carriage. A few old matrons chattered eagerly among themselves. Sybil extended a hand to a noted artist, and, for want of something better to do, bade him drive home with her.

Mr. Craig Desmond had been an old

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friend of Lord Hové's in his younger days, and, as her father's friend, had petted Sybil when she was a child. It had been Desmond who protested so violently when they named her "Sybil Audrey."

"Call her 'Mary,'" he said, "or some simple, strong name. That child will never be namby-pamby enough to fit the name of 'Sybil Audrey.'" But Lady Hové, who was one of the namby-pamby sort, insisted on the latter name, and so the infant was baptized.

"Has Mr. Thorpe come home?" Sybil asked the servant who opened the door.

"Yes, my lady; he's in the library."

"Tell him I would like to see him in the drawing-room," Sybil directed. Desmond helped her out of her long mauve cloak. Any other woman would have fussed with tea-things in the drawing-room; but, instead, Sybil turned to the artist, and said:

"You'll have a *petit verre*." The phrase was not a question. "I'll mix you a martini, if you prefer," she continued. "John prefers martinis, with an olive, you know."

The servant brought in a table and a few simple things—a bottle of biters, another bottle of gin, and a silver cup and strainer. Sybil deftly mixed three cocktails.

"Here's your martini, John," she called to her husband, as he stood in the doorway. Thorpe nodded to Desmond.

"Damnable crowd at Dot's wedding," Desmond remarked. Thorpe simply nodded his head. He was not accustomed to hearing pet names applied to such prominent figures in the London world as the Honorable Dorothy Flagg, or her husband, the ninth Earl of Thraw. He had married an earl's daughter. Yet, he could never feel at kinship with all the great world of titles, which he had watched from afar, first as a broker's clerk, and later as a small operator on 'Change. Even when his great deal in Africans had made him the most prominent figure on 'Change, he still felt in awe of a title.

"I told Dot to cut her honeymoon short—that she would appreciate Thraw much better if she didn't see too much of him at first."

Thorpe moved, uneasily; he was becoming suspicious that Sybil had really been glad that they had spent no honeymoon together. He was not a sentimental man, yet he felt regret that his wife should appear pleased because they had had no honeymoon. In his heart, he vowed they would go away together, perhaps within a week. The season was nearly over; Sybil would not mind leaving, and everything was quieting down on 'Change.

Desmond stood in the doorway. His agile, boyish figure looked more boyish than ever in his frock-coat. His white hair and mustache contrasted with his fresh, unwrinkled face. When asked how he kept so young, Desmond would laugh, and answer: "For every night out, I spend a night in."

It was a principle worth remembering.

"Ta-ta!" he cried back to Sybil; "you'll be at the premier's to-night?"

"John and I are going," she answered. "By the way, if you see Frankie, tell her to be sure to wait for me. I wish to make arrangements for a supper at the Cecil. You'll join us, won't you?"

"Gladly," Desmond answered.

John and Sybil were left alone in the drawing-room. He turned to her, fiercely.

"I have told you you must not go with that abominable Frankland woman." His Presbyterian blood was on fire. He could not tolerate a divorced woman, and Lady Frankland was the heroine of two separate and distinct divorces. Sybil swung a tiny medal of St. Anthony, strung on a gold chain, around her finger. She was a Catholic, and, fundamentally, should have discouraged divorces.

"Frankie's a duke's daughter," Sybil replied.

The taunt stung. Thorpe had never before had his wife twit him on his fondness for titles.

"Cumbermere will ask us to Edge-Cumbre, if Frankie wishes it. You would like to stay at Edge-Cumbre, wouldn't you?"

Thorpe waved his arm. "Damn Edge-Cumbre!" he said. "I do not wish my wife, whom all the world must honor, to run with a little plaything."

Sybil laughed. "Tragics from a stock-broker!" she said. "You'll be getting sentimental next. Heavens, how my ideal of a successful stock-broker has fallen! I thought them all too engrossed in money matters to care about divorces, or to be anxious to become dukes' guests."

Thorpe faced her angrily. "God!" he cried, "did you marry me for that? Did you think me such a money-grub that I would not wish my wife to be pure and sweet and true; that I was so anxious for social preference that I would let you go with a woman like Lady Frankland, merely for the sake of staying at her worn-out old father's castle?"

Sybil faltered. She had thought exactly that, but she felt a wave of pity, not tenderness, for her husband.

"I was simply angry," she said. Her long fingers were held out to him. "Forgive me!"

Thorpe caught her hand, and kissed her—kissed her with a passion he had never displayed before. "I am going to take you on a honeymoon next week," he said. "You will have to endure my company for three whole months."

"Very well," she answered, without enthusiasm, much as one accepts a verbal invitation to dine. But her heart made protest. She could not, she would not go with him. The darling Sybil, who had done as she pleased, who had ridden the wildest horses in England, was not fitted to take the commands a man gives his wife. She rebelled.

But Lady Frankland was not at the premier's that night. Every one expected her. Her husband appeared late in the evening, his smooth brow overclouded with a frown. He was in

full dress, and wore the grand cross of St. Michael and St. George, a reward for services rendered the Empire in the colonies.

"Where's Frankie?" Sybil was matter-of-fact in her tone. It was the question all had been anxious to ask. "We're getting up a supper-party at the Cecil, and I wanted you and Frankie to join us."

Sir Frederic gave a faint smile. "I do not think Frankie will be here to-night," he said. "She made another engagement at the last moment; quite unexpectedly, I believe." Frankland passed on.

Desmond bent his white head low. "Have you seen Dicky Lawton?" he asked.

Sybil's eyes did not look into his as she answered: "Dicky was going down Bond street with her this morning. They seemed very much occupied, and did not see me."

"Frankland is very much cut up," Desmond said to Sybil, the next afternoon. She was giving an "at home," for "some one who had done something in letters," as Desmond phrased it.

"But you should have seen Thorpe's face at breakfast this morning!" Sybil replied. "He turned to me with a very commanding air. 'See what that Frankland woman has done now!' he cried. I told him it was merely to be expected. Then, he grew angrier, and gave me a Presbyterian sermon. It was a long one, and I told him that I had no intention of leaving him."

"Frankie is a divorce-maniac." Desmond spoke loudly, in order that his last cheap witticism might be heard. He was rewarded, for it was whispered all over the drawing-rooms as "Desmond's latest."

"Where have they gone?" Sybil asked.

"To America," Desmond answered. "I must give Frankie credit for being original. Her first elopement was to Australia. When she ran off with Frankland, they simply stayed in London—the last place any one would think of looking for them. Now, she's

gone to America. They'll land in New York next week."

"Did Frankland know, last night?" Sybil asked.

Desmond nodded. "Yes, he knew yesterday afternoon. But he'll never make a change in his life. He's quite nervy. I saw him in at the Carlton, this afternoon, playing a rubber with Torresdale."

"I wonder how Thorpe would act under similar circumstances?" Sybil mused. This last remark was so low that Desmond alone heard it.

"The only way to find out is to try," he answered.

Thorpe came down to breakfast two days later.

"Her ladyship left early this morning," the man said; "this note is for you, sir."

Thorpe took the letter, with a preoccupied air. He turned to a couple of cablegrams, and opened them. They were from an agent in Africa, who was contemplating a coup, and was laying his plans with his noted astuteness. To Sybil's note, Thorpe gave no attention. She frequently breakfasted before him, for she was fond of the early morning, and went horseback-riding at an hour when the fashionable world slept.

When Thorpe reached his office he read what his wife had written.

DEAR THORPE:

I am going off on a jaunt by myself. Will cable me whereabouts next week.

Yours,

SYBIL.

He sprang to his feet. He could see that she had followed in the infamous Frankland woman's footsteps. She had run off with a lover, to join Frankie and Dicky Lawton. Well, let her go. With a great effort, he choked down his feeling. He turned to his secretary, and began dictating his mail. As a vent, he took up his scheme for cornering a certain South African stock, and threw, not only his money, but his indomitable will into it. All day he planned, schemed and worked. It was quite late when he

reached home. The house seemed so silent, so dull without Sybil! She had never been affectionate, but she had always been companionable.

Desmond dropped in that evening. Thorpe was startled, for he had thought Desmond was her *compagnon de voyage*. Desmond said nothing concerning Sybil, and Thorpe did not mention her. It was as if she were forgotten.

Lady Sybil caught an outgoing steamer at Plymouth. She had telegraphed to Bremen to reserve a state-room, and had received an answer that it was done. Few people boarded the steamer at Plymouth, for the tide of travel was in the other direction.

On the third day out, she was in her favorite place on the saloon deck, when a tall, rather good-looking young man came up to her.

"Don't you remember me, Lady Sybil?" he asked.

She held out a hand, with a welcoming gesture. "I'm sure I don't," she said, frankly; "but, the minute you give me a bit of a clue, I'll know."

"An eight-foot stone fence, a nasty bit of brush, and a five-foot stream beyond it."

Sybil laughed. "We went over it together, didn't we?" she asked, "and the whole Quorn Hunt rode around. Oh, yes, I know now. You're Fleming Kane. But what have you been doing in the past four years? Any more invasions of Ireland, or have you been off to Thibet, or on an Antarctic expedition? I am sure you Americans are so vastly energetic that you cannot keep still."

Kane sighed. "I'm very sorry, Lady Sybil," he answered, "but I have done nothing interesting since then. I've gone into stock-broking. I've a seat in the New York Stock Exchange, and I'm doing well."

"Have you heard of my marriage?" Sybil asked. Kane nodded his head. "Then, you know I've married a stock-broker," she said.

"And the master man in the whole British Empire." Kane's compliment

was sincere; he had a very great respect for the figure that had dominated the London market for four years. Suddenly, he remembered that the wedding was an incident of only two months ago. How was it that Lady Sybil was taking a trip to the States, *sans* the newly acquired husband? He asked no questions, and his very cosmopolitan face showed no signs of his thought.

"I suppose Thorpe will be over in the Autumn," Sybil said, with a view of settling the matter. "I have an idea he'll go into a big deal in Americans, as we call your stock in London, and he'll lay his plans in New York."

Kane made a quick, nervous gesture. The information was worth a great deal to him. He could play the market, on Thorpe's arrival, to his own benefit.

"Where are you going in America?" he asked, with a great show of interest.

"To New York, first. I don't know where I'll go next. I wish to see the States, and get an idea of things generally."

"Then, Lady Sybil, can't we entertain you at Newport? Mother would be very happy to have you, and Tess will second the invitation. She's down in her state-room, now."

Sybil laughed. She remembered a time when dainty Tess Kane had gone sailing with her on the Irish Sea.

"Yes, Mr. Kane"—Sybil was quite frank—"I'll be only too glad to visit you at Newport. But you must not be offended if I stay only for a short time, as I wish to go West for a tour."

When the steamer tied up at the North River pier, Lady Sybil left the Kanes, and drove to the Waldorf. She would have to spend several days in New York before she could go to Newport. The Kanes were going up on the night boat. She bade them good-bye at the pier.

"I'll be in Newport by the end of the week," she said.

She had cabled to Thorpe from the German Lloyd pier. It was a short cable, announcing her arrival, and

saying that she would be at the Waldorf for some days.

At the hotel, she noticed that her coming created some sensation. But she gave no heed to any one. Not until she reached her rooms, and her maid began to unpack, did she pause to think. From the moment of her departure from Great Cumberland street until she reached the hotel, she had not allowed herself to wonder over Thorpe's action. She knew he would be angry, yet she did not fear that he would be so enraged that he could not be overcome. Love Thorpe, she did not, yet she felt an admiration for his wonderful nerve and his keen brain. Only a woman who had lived Sybil's life could have appreciated Thorpe as she did. She saw in him a master hunter of big game. To a woman of her type, mastery was the keynote of life.

The maid brought in the morning papers. She laid them, folded, at Sybil's elbow, as the latter took her roll and cup of coffee. One of the papers was folded uppermost. Sybil caught the name, "Thorpe," in heavy, black, head-line letters. Thorpe! What could they be saying of Thorpe? She spread the paper before her. The black letters of the "scare-head" type flaunted themselves flamboyantly before her.

"LADY SYBIL AT THE WALDORF
MR. THORPE'S WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.

HEROINE OF SCANDAL AT HOLLAND
HOUSE SEPARATED FROM HER HUSBAND."

Sybil could not understand this, nor did the article, which related her arrival at the Waldorf, enlighten her. It referred constantly to the "trouble at the Holland," her quarrel with her husband, and other things equally difficult to understand.

"Tell the manager I should like to see him, immediately; here, in my private parlor," she telephoned to the office.

"Explain these newspaper articles

to me, if you please," she said, when the manager stood before her. "I have arrived but yesterday, in company with Miss Theresa Kane and her brother. The papers, however, seem to have had me here before, and in company with my husband, with whom I seem to have created a public scene."

"Mr. John Thorpe and Lady Sybil Thorpe registered at the Holland, last week," the manager said. "On Thursday, when they were dining in the café, she grew angry and threw a dinner-plate at her husband's head. It missed him and struck a waiter. They left the Holland that night, and have not been heard from since. Immediately upon your ladyship's arrival here, the press caught hold of the matter. It seems there must be a mistake—that the people at the Holland were not you and your husband."

"Decidedly not," Sybil declared. "Mr. Thorpe is in London, and Mr. Fleming Kane, or the officers of the steamer on which I sailed, will vouch for my having just arrived. But I wish you would send for a reporter from each of these papers."

The manager bowed; a suppressed smile trembled around his mouth.

"They are down in the lobby by the dozen, madame, and have been trying to see you for more than an hour. But your maid declared no one could see you until after twelve."

"Send them up, then," Lady Sybil directed. She turned into her bedroom, made a rapid toilette, and was waiting for the reporters when they entered the room. She rose from her chair.

"Good morning, gentlemen," she said, with much cordiality.

The foremost man, a star in metropolitan journalism, stopped short.

"Why, I must be mistaken," he stammered. "This is not the Lady Sybil who was at the Holland."

"Of course, it is not," she answered. "You seem to have taken it for granted that the woman at the Holland and I are the same. Now,

to make things clear, I would say that I am Lady Sybil Thorpe, daughter of Lord Hové, of Balmackly, Mayo, Ireland, and was married to Mr. John Thorpe, the London stock-broker, about two months ago. I arrived yesterday, on the *Kaiser*, as the officers of that vessel can testify. Also, Mr. Fleming Kane, of Newport, and his sister, Miss Theresa Kane, who are old friends of mine, and who were my *compagnons de voyage*, can inform you as to my presence on the *Kaiser*. Now, kindly tell me what the lady at the Holland looked like."

"She was very small, with a great deal of blond hair, gray eyes, and dressed very handsomely."

"And the man with her was tall, over-heavy, and dressed rather——"

"You've got him to a T!" cried one of the men.

Sybil fingered the embroidery on her gown. Then just after Lady Frankland's first divorce, she remembered that she had treated her friend coldly, and Lady Frankie had said that she would make Sybil smart for it some day. This was the sting.

"The pair were Lady Frederic Frankland, better known as 'Frankie' Frankland, and Captain the Honorable Richard Lawson, commonly called 'Dicky' Lawson. They have tried to impersonate me and my husband. Kindly make inquiry to see that my story is correct, and publish the amended statement in your next issues." Sybil's voice had grown hard. "I may add that I go at once to Newport, to stay with Mrs. Bernard Kane. Good morning, gentlemen." She turned from them, and passed into her bedroom.

"Mrs. Bernard Kane? The Grand Factotum herself! Her story must be straight," one of the men cried; and the group dispersed.

But the original story of the quarrel at the Holland had been cabled to England, and John Thorpe read it as he sat over breakfast at his house in Great Cumberland street. Only a

day later came Sybil's cablegram, announcing her arrival in New York. Thorpe laughed as he read it. He threw it in the waste-basket, and paid no further attention to it. A day later, he joined a friend on his yacht, and sailed for the North Cape. The cabled contradiction of the Holland affair reached England far too late for Thorpe to see it.

When he returned, in the Autumn, no one said anything to him about his wife. Occasionally, however, he would read a despatch which told of her successes at American watering-places, and prophesied triumphs for her in New York, the coming Winter. Thorpe could not understand how she could have eloped and yet be received by the smart American set. Still, he attempted no explanation, although he wondered from what source Sybil drew the funds for her expensive life. He knew well the impoverished old Lord Hové could give her no money. Her account at his bank lay untouched. But he had quite forgotten the two thousand pounds he had placed to her credit in the Borbet Bank, at the time of their return to London from the three days' honeymoon. It was from this account that Sybil drew her expenses.

In October, Thorpe's big deal in American stocks took him to New York. He went very quietly, and, outside his own private brokers, no one knew of his presence there. But it chanced that his brokers, Paine & Holcomb, were intimately connected with Fleming Kane, Paine being Kane's cousin.

"My mother would like you to dine with us to-night," Kane told Thorpe. "She is very much interested in matters financial and commercial. In fact, she's the leading spirit in the brokerage firm of Fleming, Kane & Company. I'll promise that there shall be no one to meet you, if you wish; we will dine *en famille*." And Thorpe assented.

Dinner was over, and the small party were gathered together in the library.

The footman brought a card to Miss Kane.

"Ah, bring her to the library," she said.

Sybil paused in the doorway. She saw the dark head of the man who had let her go so easily, and who had made no effort to win her back. But she did not falter. With her usual manner, she greeted every one in the room. Then, she turned to her husband, holding out her hand.

"Glad to see you, Thorpe," she said.

"Hope you're quite well, Sybil," he answered.

Sybil turned to Miss Kane.

"I've just stopped to tell you that I will not be able to join your luncheon-party down-town to-morrow. I'm packing to return to England. A cable this morning tells me of my father's illness, and I sail on the first steamer. You'll forgive me, I know. Good night and—good-bye." She turned to leave the room. Thorpe made no movement. Suddenly, he heard the cold, cutting voice of Mrs. Kane, saying:

"Mr. Thorpe will see Lady Sybil to her carriage."

Thorpe caught up his overcoat and hat as he passed into the hall. Sybil looked out of the door in surprise. Her carriage was not there.

"Oh, I told him not to come back for half an hour," she said. "I was on my way to a dinner, and thought I'd chat with the Kanes for a while." But she went on down the steps, and Thorpe unwillingly followed her. She turned resolutely down the Avenue. Her husband kept step with her. When he looked at her, he could see nothing but her hooded head.

"I'll call you a cab," he said. The hooded head nodded.

"Oh, Sybil," he began, very awkwardly; "I did not understand anything until yesterday. I was looking over a file of old papers, to note the fluctuations of the market, and found the whole story. Won't you forgive me for not answering your cable? Won't you forgive what I thought?"

The muffled head nodded.

"But did you hate me so much that you could not bear the idea of three months alone with me? Did you not love me at all?"

The hood made no answer. Thorpe bent over so that he could look under the hood, and into the eyes.

"Didn't you love me a little?" he asked.

"You do not ask the question in the right way," she answered. Thorpe did not understand. "You have not wooed me at all," she added.

Then, he laughed. "Ah! don't you love me now?" he asked.

Sybil caught his hand. "Yes," she answered, and threw her head back so that her eyes looked squarely into his. A cab rattled by. Thorpe whistled after it. The cabman wheeled back.

"To Mrs. Dencla's," Sybil ordered.

"Mrs. Dencla, this is my husband, Mr. John Thorpe," Lady Sybil said; "I took the liberty of bringing him with me. He has just come over from England. We go back soon—together."



THE DREAM STREAM

HAVE you sailed the Dream Stream's silver?
Have you floated in the night
Where the sunken moon is shining,
Globed with lilies, wonder-white,
And the waves, pearl-pale, are lying
Half-distilled to liquid light?

There, where silken stems are swaying,
And the gnome-flower bends and blows,
All the wraiths of yester sunshine
Steal from shades the dream-tree throws.
Oh, the music of the silence
Of the haunted water-close!

Plumes of bloom droop on the ripples,
Trembling up to meet the air;
Clouds of little, whispering spirits,
With shut eyes and foam-filled hair,
Woo you, woo you till your heart breaks,
With its longing and its prayer.

ZONA GALE.



SO IT SEEMS

LITTLE STUYVESANT UPTERDATE—Papa, what is "the national game," that we read about so often?
PAPA—Divorce, my son.

AN HOUR OF EARTH

By Theodosia Garrison

SCENE—A room with many books, richly furnished and hung in crimson. Flowers stand here and there on the low tables, among magazines and photographs. An open fire burns in the grate. Between the curtains at the window, the snow can be seen falling steadily. In a large chair before the fire, a girl is sitting. She has a book in her hand, but she is not reading. There is no sound in the room but the ticking of a clock, and the occasional whisper of the fire.

THE GHOST

How still she is! She has not opened her book at all, and she has not once looked away from the fire. I think, if she would, she could see me. It seems almost as though I might say to her, "I fell asleep last night thinking of you, and this morning I came to you." I wonder if it was last night? I asked nothing more than to see her then, but, now that I have looked at her, it seems as though I could speak to her, as though I *must*. There was so much unsaid! And yet she knew—she must have known. She is looking at me. It seems as though she were waiting for me to speak. Eleanor! Oh, my sweet, you knew how much I loved you; that, from the moment I saw you, every other woman in the world was less to me than a shadow. But, because I had lived a man's life, I made myself wait until I was worthier to tell you so. If I had known one hour—just one little hour—before—Eleanor, can you hear me?

The girl rises and walks listlessly to the window.

Tell me that you understood, that you knew what my silence meant! If, in any way, you can tell me that, I shall be quite content. I shall never even ask you if you loved me.

Eleanor, answer me!

The girl pulls aside the curtains, and stands watching the falling snow.

A MAID (at the door)

Your mother wishes to know, Miss Eleanor, if you are ready for Madame Cecile's recital. She is waiting for you.

THE GIRL

Tell her, I am not going.

THE MAID (apologetically)

She is very anxious to have you go, Miss Eleanor. She says you haven't been out of the house for a week, and to tell you—

THE GIRL

Tell her, I am not going.

The maid retires.

THE GHOST

Why does she not go? I wonder if it is because—! What did the girl say about a week? It cannot be as long as that. If I could know what she is thinking! It is strange to see her so still. I thought once that she always laughed. Eleanor, why are you turning so? Can you hear me?

THE MAID (returning)

Mrs. Remington wishes to know if you will see her, Miss Eleanor.

THE GHOST

Mrs. Remington! Mrs. Remington! What is she doing here? You should

never have known her, Eleanor. She is not fit to come in the room with you. Tell her, you will not see her!

THE MAID

She says it's about the Children's Hospital, Miss Eleanor.

THE GHOST

Tell her that you will not see her.

THE GIRL

Ask her to come up here, Marie.

THE GHOST

What does she mean by coming here? Why should she wish to see you? She has no right to see you.

THE MAID

Mrs. Remington!

THE GHOST

I wonder if she would smile like that if she knew I was here! She has cause enough, perhaps, to hate me, but why should she look at you like that?

THE GIRL

Why, Mrs. Remington, how brave of you to venture out on a morning like this! The babies should be grateful. Sit here by the fire. There's nothing wrong at the hospital, is there? Let me take your furs.

MRS. REMINGTON

Thanks. No, nothing very much. I really meant to see your mother, but when I found she was out, I thought I would like a little chat with you. You seem always so happy, so optimistic, and I—I need a little cheering. But, my dear, you're not looking at all well, yourself, this morning. One would almost fancy, if the idea were possible, that you had been crying.

THE GHOST

That was a brutal thing to say, and she knows you said it to be brutal. That is why she laughs. But why did you say it?

THE GIRL

Crying? No, indeed. I have a beastly headache this morning, and I

have made it worse by trying to read this stupid book. Have you read it?

MRS. REMINGTON

Yes—no. I haven't the heart to read anything. Eleanor—you don't mind my calling you "Eleanor," do you, dear?—do you know, you are the only one of my friends who hasn't appeared to be at least a little sorry for me? and I thought I could count on your sympathy—you have seemed so good a friend, of late.

THE GHOST

What does she mean? Of whom is she speaking? Eleanor, she is not crying—I have seen her pretend to cry before. She is watching you, now, over her handkerchief.

THE GIRL

Feel sorry for you, Mrs. Remington—sympathize with you? I don't understand. Why should I feel sorry for you?

MRS. REMINGTON

But, my dear, surely you know of Jack Hastings's death! There has been nothing else talked of for a week. It was so horribly sudden! And, now that it is too late—oh, I know I have much, much to reproach myself for!

THE GHOST

My name! She is speaking of me—of me! Eleanor, you shall not listen to her! Oh, my sweet, how pale you are! Tell her that you will not hear her.

THE GIRL

You will think me very stupid, Mrs. Remington, but again I fail to understand. Has it anything to do with—with Mr. Hastings? What do you mean?

MRS. REMINGTON

Oh, Eleanor, surely you must know! I was certain he had told you. I had begged him so often—you must have guessed that we were all the world to each other, Jack and I.

THE GHOST

Eleanor!

A silence.

THE GIRL

I did not know, Mrs. Remington.

THE GHOST

Eleanor, my darling, you shall not believe her, you shall not! She is lying to you. I have not seen her for months. She was less than nothing to me, and she knew it only too well. Smile at her, laugh at her! Show her that you do not believe her!

MRS. REMINGTON

You know a divorcée has to be so careful, so very careful, and dear Jack was so impetuous! He could never understand why I made him wait—why I wasn't willing to marry him at once, when we loved each other so.

THE GHOST

You are lying! You know that is a lie!

MRS. REMINGTON

What did you say?

THE GIRL

I said nothing, Mrs. Remington.

MRS. REMINGTON

You said—what did you mean by saying that?

THE GIRL

I said nothing, Mrs. Remington. I did not speak to you.

MRS. REMINGTON

I thought you said—forgive me, I have been so unhappy that I can scarcely trust my brain. But, Eleanor, won't you say that you are sorry for me? I always thought you were so fond of Jack. I used to tease him about it, sometimes.

THE GHOST

Eleanor, you must not believe her—you must not! She is doing this because she knew I loved you. Eleanor, try to hear me, try!

MRS. REMINGTON

It is sweet to pretend to be jealous when one is as sure as I was.

THE GIRL

Why do you tell me this, Mrs. Remington? What is it to me?

THE GHOST

How brave you are, beloved! Keep looking at her, steadily; so. Even if you do not care, she must never think you do.

MRS. REMINGTON

He used to laugh—it seemed to amuse him that I could even think he might prefer another woman to me. Oh——!

THE GHOST

She is trying to make you suffer. She hates you, because you knew. Tell her that you knew I loved you. Eleanor, you cannot believe these things of me! I tell you, she is lying!

MRS. REMINGTON

Why did you say that? Why do you pretend not to believe me?

THE GIRL

What do you mean? I said nothing. I have no reason to disbelieve you, Mrs. Remington.

THE GHOST

Eleanor, you *cannot* mean that, you *cannot*!

MRS. REMINGTON

Is there any one talking in the other room—near us?

THE GIRL

There is no one in the other room.

MRS. REMINGTON

Then, there is some one whispering in the hall.

THE GIRL

I hear nothing, Mrs. Remington. There is no one in the hall.

MRS. REMINGTON

I fancied—oh, nothing! Do you remember, Eleanor, what a curious voice

Jack Hastings had? How low it was when—when he was angry!

THE GIRL

What has all this to do with me, Mrs. Remington? Why do you discuss Mr. Hastings with me? Why should you think I would be interested? I am very sorry for you if you wish me to say that—very sorry.

THE GHOST

Eleanor, she shall not make you believe her—this coward who is striking you with a dead man's hand! Look at her; she is beginning to be afraid of her own lies, already! See how pale she is growing! She is looking about as though she were afraid of something beside her—terribly afraid.

MRS. REMINGTON

I—what was that you said, Eleanor?

THE GIRL

I have said that I was sorry, Mrs. Remington. There is nothing more I can say, is there?

MRS. REMINGTON

No—oh, no! You have been very sweet. I knew I could count on your sympathy. I—I think I must be going. I am not well.

THE GIRL

Good-bye, Mrs. Remington.

THE GHOST

You shall not go, and leave these lies behind you! You shall not! Tell her the truth!

MRS. REMINGTON

Good-bye.

THE GHOST

I say, you shall *not* go! Tell her the truth!

MRS. REMINGTON

Eleanor!

THE GIRL

Mrs. Remington, what is the matter? You are ill! Here, sit here.

THE GHOST

Tell her the truth!

MRS. REMINGTON

I—oh, it is nothing—nothing. Just a moment! Where are you going? Don't leave me here alone!

THE GIRL

I am only bringing you some water. I am not going to leave you. Why do you act so strangely, Mrs. Remington?

THE GHOST

Tell her the truth!

MRS. REMINGTON

Eleanor—I—

THE GIRL

Yes?

MRS. REMINGTON

Eleanor, when I spoke to you about myself just now, I—

THE GHOST

Go on!

MRS. REMINGTON

Perhaps, I may have exaggerated matters a trifle, a—

THE GHOST

That will not do. Tell her the truth—tell her that you lied!

THE GIRL

You frighten me, Mrs. Remington. What is the matter?

THE GHOST

Tell her that you lied!

MRS. REMINGTON

I—the things I said to you—were not—not all true. I think you misunderstood me.

THE GIRL

What do you mean?

THE GHOST

Tell her what you mean!

MRS. REMINGTON

I told you that Jack Hastings loved me—

THE GIRL

Do you think I doubted you?

MRS. REMINGTON

—and that—that I was to have been his wife—

THE GIRL

Yes—you told me that.

MRS. REMINGTON

It was not true—it was a lie! It was all a lie!

THE GIRL

What do you mean by this? How do I know you are telling me the truth, now? Why did you tell me these things, at all?

THE GHOST

Tell her why!

MRS. REMINGTON

I told you because I was jealous of you. I thought I could make you feel as you have made me. If you had cared for him, you would have suffered. He never loved me, and I—and I—

THE GIRL

Perhaps, I can guess what you mean. Why should you humiliate yourself further? What possible difference can it make to me? But, if you tried so hard before to make me believe you, why do you tell me the truth now?

MRS. REMINGTON

I do not know.

THE GIRL

You do not know?

MRS. REMINGTON

I suppose some people might call it a conscience. I do not know; only—I am afraid. Oh, can't you see that I am ill, horribly nervous? I scarcely know what I am saying. Let me go!

THE GIRL

Why should you not go, Mrs. Remington?

THE GHOST

Eleanor, you have heard what she said: "If you had cared for him, you would have suffered." Eleanor, you have been so still! Was it because you did not care?

THE GIRL

Good-bye, Mrs. Remington. There is not much we can say to each other. If you are ill, I should be glad to send my maid home with you.

MRS. REMINGTON

Thank you, no. I am much better. I cannot tell you—I hope— No. I sha'n't ask you anything more. Good-bye.

THE GHOST

She grew very old before she left the room; even her eyes were old. Eleanor, you are not thinking of her, though you stand as though you were watching her go. Of what are you thinking? Perhaps, how hurt you might have been if you *had* loved me. You are smiling now—that is because you are glad you *could* not be wounded. Oh, my sweet, in this last, poor hour of mine, you might have spared me that smile and all it means. You are smiling, but—Eleanor, there are tears in your eyes—tears!

THE GIRL

She drops suddenly on her knees beside the chair at the hearth, and covers her face with her hands. A silence; then:

Oh, my love, if the dead can know, if they care, you know I never doubted you, not once! I loved you too much to doubt. You *know* I did not believe!



"WHERE did you learn your French?"

"In Paris. And you?"

"In Boston."

"Well, never mind; we both speak English."

EXPERIENCE

ON yesterday, with scornful eyes
 I look to-day, since I am wise.
 I read the law, I learned the rule;
 And I am wise, who was a fool!

But, ah! the birds no longer brim
 With tender trumpetings of him!
 There is no chorus in the skies
 Of splendid stars, since I am wise!

The after-vision pricks with flaws
 The glib god Love. We jeer because
 The idol topples from the shelf—
 We mock the dupe that was ourself!

But, ah! no days of gypsyding!
 The riot rapture of the Spring
 Fades cold—its promises are lies—
 I am a fool, who once was wise!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



A MEAN EDITOR

MABEL—The editor of that paper is just as mean as he can be. Lucy took an original poem to him, and begged him to print it just as she wrote it.

LENA—And the wretch refused?
 “No; he printed it.”

F. M. H.



A SURPRISE IN THE MENAGERIE

CAMEL—So, it's really true that the big snake has swallowed the goat?
 GORILLA—Indeed, it is; and to look at him no one would ever think the butter would melt in his mouth.



“A MAN may be a fool and not know it,” but not if he has friends.

BUYING THE ENGAGEMENT RING

By Alex. Ricketts

I HAD loafed around in front of the shop, hoping to find a moment when it was clear of customers—and I never saw business so good in all my life—until I had evidently excited the suspicions of the policeman on the corner, and until I felt myself a fool. This buying an engagement ring was more embarrassing than I had anticipated. Why were engagement rings worn, anyhow? Rings and such tokens were simply a survival of barbarism, that should be abolished by civilized peoples. I wondered if I couldn't persuade the dearest girl in the world to take that view of it. But I knew I didn't dare try.

It was the proudest and happiest moment of my life, I reasoned, irrefutably. Then, why in the name of Hymen, did I feel so sheepish over it?

I swore to put off all timidity. Everybody could know, if they wished. I was willing to proclaim the glorious truth from the housetops; heralds could announce it on every corner, for all I cared. The town crier could shout it along every street and lane, without fazing me in the least.

Chock full of this valiant defiance of all the world, I threw up my head, stuck out my chin, swelled out my chest, and stalked boldly into the shop.

I strode sternly up to the nearest clerk, and said, in loud, vibrant tones, despite the hideous fact that I felt every one had stopped trafficking to watch me, "I want to see some of your—er—of your—er—er—hem! please let me see some of your—er—your—er—your clocks."

It was ignominious. Why, oh, why had I yielded to that sudden impulse of cowardice, that foolish longing to gain time at any cost? The clerk's suave, "Yes, sir; just step this way, sir," fell on unheeding ears, as, loathingly, I contemplated the depth of my fall.

"I think you said you'd like to look at some clocks, sir," suggested the clerk, after waiting a few minutes for me to follow him.

"I did—miserable shuffler that I am, I did," I exclaimed, bitterly. "But I don't. I shouldn't care if there'd never been a clock made."

The clerk stared.

"What I really want to see, and I don't care who knows it," I continued, in a firm, resonant voice, "is some of your—er—er—pianos."

Again, I had balked at the fatal word. Oh, what a wretched poltroon I was! I flushed to the roots of my hair. I looked wildly around for some avenue of escape. Oh, to get away, to hide myself and my shame in some far-distant and desolate country, where I should be the only living soul!

I threw up my arms, in instinctive defense, and ducked, with both eyes shut tight, as I felt a hand close upon my elbow.

"I think, sir," whispered the clerk, who had slipped from behind the counter, without my noticing his movement, "that—excuse me—it is probably a wedding-ring you wish to see."

I opened my eyes, with a gasp. "N-no, no-o-o, n-n-ot j-j-just yet!" I stammered.

"Ah, an engagement ring?" he insinuated, with the most charming smile I ever beheld.

I grasped his hand, and wrung it, fervently; tears of gratitude started in my eyes. I would gladly have laid down my life to give him a moment's pleasure.

"How did you ever guess?" I cried, amazed at such miraculous penetration.

That night, the dearest girl in the world wished to know if I had had much trouble selecting the ring, but—she—does—not—know!



THE ROSE'S TWILIGHT CALL

O THOU, my bulbul, come and sing to me
 In the night-scented garden! Day is done,
 And all the shy, fond things that fear the sun
 Call softly to their loves, as I to thee.
 Come from the hiding in the lonely tree,
 For, in the long, sweet night that's now begun,
 The Lover, Love and the Beloved One
 Are only one—and so, Love, we shall be.

Come, O my lingering bulbul! And thy song
 Shall thrill with joy the still, expectant air,
 Till every vibrant note is live and strong;
 And thy enraptured Rose the veil will tear
 From her heart's inmost sweetness, to prolong
 The maddening music of thy love's wild prayer.

ELSA BARKER.



THE PLACE

"YOU can't very well miss it," said neck-whiskered-and-pessimistically-inclined Farmer Bentover, in reply to the inquiry of the stranger. "Just keep on along down the road, till you come to a white house, on the right-hand side, with green blinds, where there's a commanding-sized woman inside, shaped considerably like a clothes-horse, trimming a hat, or sewing a rag mat, or something of the sort, and at the same time putting up preserves, rocking the cradle, believing in predestination and a literal hell, picking flaws in the entire neighborhood, watching to see everybody that passes by, wondering to gracious where they are going, and what for, and giving large, angular pieces of her mind to a small, frightened-looking husband, who appears to be on the point, most of the time, of trying to crawl inside of himself, as a kangaroo is said to hide in its own watch-pocket in time of danger. Yes, that's where my second cousin, Canute J. Pennypacker, lives."



HE—I should kiss you, but I am afraid you would set the dog on me.
 SHE (*patting the dog's head*)—Poor beast! he has lost all his teeth.